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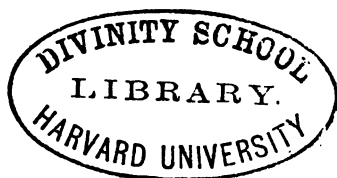


SHORT SKETCHES.



SHORT SKETCHES OF SOME
NOTABLE LIVES.

BY
JOHN CAMPBELL COLQUHOUN.
=



SEELEY, JACKSON, AND HALLIDAY, FLEET STREET ;
AND B. SEELEY, HANOVER STREET ;
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INTRODUCTION.

THE first of these sketches was written for a periodical at the suggestion of a friend. Two others were added at the request of friends, on whose judgment I relied. It is in deference to their opinions that I publish these sketches, with the addition of some others not yet printed.

The lives selected for notice, it will be observed, are those of Dissenters ; though all of them exercised a lasting influence on the fortunes of the Church of England. In selecting these lives as subjects, that consideration weighed much with me ; but there was another.

The biographies of the most eminent men of our Church have, for the most part, been written by persons whose style is singularly attractive, and whose works, from their excellence and reputation, forbid either alteration or abridgment. It was necessary to turn to biographies less known, which are often buried under materials that enrich but overwhelm them.

Those, who, with me, regard the Church of England as possessing an important mission to mankind, will feel a lively interest in tracing the circumstances and the characters, which have influenced its course.

For our Church has often drawn her best resources from the obstacles which have beset her, and the stern discipline of attack has been the instrument in God's hands of recalling her to principles which were her foundation and strength. Thus the Biography of her opponents becomes a chapter in the history of her life, and their fidelity to truth is the earnest and precursor of her revival.

But these thoughts, full of interest, of which the following narratives present some illustrations, I leave to the judgment of my Reader, satisfied if I can suggest any topic for reflection, or supply any pleasant occupation for leisure : unless indeed I may indulge the hope that, through subjects of common interest, writer and reader will be drawn into sympathy, and, greeting here at the threshold as strangers, we may, in the end, part as friends.

Chartwell, June, 1855.

CONTENTS.

First Sketch.

THE PHILANTHROPISTS OF ENGLAND.

JOHN HOWARD.

| | PAGE |
|--------------------------------|------|
| CHAP. I. THE MISSION - - - - | 1 |
| II. THE MISSIONARY - - - - | 8 |
| III. THE WORK BEGUN - - - - | 15 |
| IV. THE SOURCES OF POWER - - - | 25 |
| V. A NEW MISSION - - - - | 33 |
| VI. THE CLOSE - - - - | 42 |

Second Sketch.

THE QUAKERISM OF ENGLAND.

GEORGE FOX.

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| CHAP. I. THE CRADLE OF ENGLISH QUAKERISM | 53 |
| II. THE FOUNDER OF QUAKERISM - | 70 |
| III. THE STORY OF THE FRIEND - | 92 |
| IV. THE CLOSE OF THE MISSION - | 107 |

WILLIAM PENN.

| | |
|--|-----|
| CHAP. I. THE YOUTH AND PROSPECTS OF PENN | 117 |
| II. PENN A QUAKER - - - | 125 |
| III. PENN A SUFFERER AND AT HOME | 132 |
| IV. PENN A LEGISLATOR - - - | 144 |
| V. PENN A STATESMAN - - - | 155 |
| VI. PENN A COURTIER - - - | 163 |
| VII. PENN A SUFFERER - - - | 171 |
| VIII. THE CLOSING SCENE - - - | 176 |

Third Sketch.

ENGLISH METHODISM.

I. THE FOUNDERS.

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| CHAP. I. THE STRENGTH OF METHODISM - | 191 |
| II. THE EARLY YOUTH OF THE LEADERS | 194 |
| III. THE DAY OF ASCETICISM—THE DAWN OF TRUTH - - - | 202 |
| IV. THE DARKNESS OF ENGLAND AND THE LIGHT - - - | 208 |

II. GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| CHAP. I. HIS WORK - - - | 219 |
| II. THE SOURCES OF HIS INFLUENCE - | 231 |
| III. HIS ORATORY - - - | 238 |
| IV. THE PREACHER AND HIS POWER - | 248 |

III. JOHN WESLEY.

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| CHAP. I. THE MISSION - - - | 261 |
| II. THE RECEPTION OF THE MISSION - | 272 |
| III. THE REFORM - - - | 286 |
| IV. THE ORGANISM OF METHODISM - | 297 |
| V. THE TEACHERS - - - | 310 |
| VI. WESLEY'S DISCIPLES - - - | 325 |
| VII. THE DOCTRINES - - - | 337 |
| VIII. THE RELATION OF METHODISM TO THE CHURCH - - - | 353 |
| IX. THE HISTORY RENEWED - - - | 361 |
| X. THE PROGRESS OF METHODISM - | 373 |
| XI. THE NECESSARY TENDENCY OF METHO- DISM - - - | 381 |
| XII. THE AUTUMN OF METHODISM - | 390 |
| XIII. THE LAST SCENES OF THE MISSION - | 400 |

First Sketch.

THE PHILANTHROPISTS OF ENGLAND.

JOHN HOWARD.

I have taken the information from Brown's "MEMOIRS OF HOWARD;"
Dixon's "MEMOIRS OF JOHN HOWARD;" and the "LIFE OF JOHN
HOWARD," by Rev. J. Field.

The first is the source of the fullest information. Mr. Dixon has reduced
this into a smaller compass, and made it far more agreeable.

JOHN HOWARD.

CHAPTER I.

THE MISSION.

WE cannot but regard it as a sign of the favour of God to England, that from a very early period she has enjoyed the services of eminently good men. Ever since the introduction of Christianity, there have been raised up from time to time, men of worth to do good in their generation. We have a golden chain of such names, stretching from the earliest period to our own. Some of these have filled obscure stations,—some, like Alfred, the highest. They have been found in all professions: in the cell of the monk, like the venerable Bede; in the bishop's chair, like Grosstête; in the calling of the pastor, like Wickliffe; in the rank of the noble, like Lord Cobham; in the country gentle-

man's estate, like Hampden and Evelyn ; in the workshop of the mechanic, and the thrift of the tradesman. It would be an interesting employment to trace out this our *Catena Patrum* ; for these are indeed the true fathers of our national character and institutions.

It ought to be noticed, that these persons were not the mere creations of our institutions. Their services were rather the cause of them, than their consequence. There ran down our history two great streams of effort, in distinct channels : the one the political effort of earnest and independent men ; the other, the moral energy which springs out of faithful and Christian hearts. These efforts often concurred to the same end ; and, in truth, we owe to their union many of the most precious of our rights, which, it may confidently be said, would never have been won, had not the political energy received force, consistency, and perseverance from the religious principle.

But though the political effort has thus often derived vigour from the religious feeling, no movements of the former have availed to overlay or arrest the latter. It runs, and has its source, independently of politics. There have been long, dreary periods in our political history, in which public truth and virtue seemed to have left the land. Such was the season which followed the great rebellion. Yet in the reign of a profligate king, in the heart of a depraved court, in the ranks of a demoralized nobility, there were cha-

racters living and moving as pure as the highest Christian principle could make them. There were Lady Godolphin, and Lady Russell, and Lord Russell,—names for which any age may be grateful.

The century which followed, especially the first half of it, was scarcely an improvement upon that deplorable reign. It was not so openly profligate, but it was as depraved. Under the cover of some outward decency, there was as little moral as political worth. In the reigns of the two first Georges, as in those of the preceding Stuarts, the court was notorious for its immorality; statesmen were corrupt; both the public and the private life of the higher classes was lax, if not dissolute; religion was at the best an affair of speculation, a very questioning and questionable theology. And the general state of the public mind corresponded with this. There was, indeed, a decline of the great excitement which had existed. Parties were broken down; conspiracy ceased to be attractive; men were prosperous, and therefore satisfied with the prevailing order of things. There was less treason, but there was also little principle. Personal intrigue and faction were the business of statesmen. Wits made light of everything, over the tables of Will's Coffee-house,—poets scoffed with Dryden and Pope,—divines speculated with Clarke, or were unscrupulous as Atterbury and Swift—philosophers circulated the infidel views of Bolingbroke or Hobbes,—and, during an age


eminent for genius, men staggered on in deep moral darkness, till it pleased God to kindle, in unexpected quarters, lights which began to dissipate the gloom.

We do not now dwell upon the work begun by Whitfield and Wesley, or upon that change in the mind of the people to which they contributed so great an impulse,—a change which visibly affected both the pulpit and the press, and made itself felt in new sentiments and opinions spread through the country. But before this period arrived, the influence of the low tone of morals and religion had materially affected our national condition.

The great business of the nation, that of making the laws, was in the hands of those who regarded it as an instrument to aggrandize themselves and their dependents. Politicians were too much engrossed with this pursuit, to think of the miseries of their countrymen. True it is, and the circumstance was providential, that the period was not one of great suffering to the nation. Had a tithe of the difficulties which now press upon us, fallen upon England in the course of the last century, the government, destitute as it was of moral power, would have been blown to pieces. But these were days of progress: our commerce, husbandry, and manufactures were advancing; and in a progressive community there is little general suffering or discontent.

Vicious habits, the offences which they generated,

and the method in which the law dealt with those offences, were the most obvious causes of the suffering which existed. The habit of drinking prevailed to an enormous degree, and the result, as is always the case, was the extension of crime. The amount of gin-drinking in the time of George II. was such as to attract the attention even of his careless Parliament, which passed an Act to repress it. These were days indeed in which crime was visited with a severity which may be called ferocious. Terror was supposed to be the one specific, and the gallows were resorted to on all occasions. But the punishments which preceded the sentence were worse, often, than the sentence itself. The gallows punished once, and the suffering was over. In the gaol, men lay for years, and rotted by inches. They were fearful places,—the gaols, then in England. The evidence submitted to a Parliamentary Committee in 1728, gives us an array of horrors which we imagined had been confined to the prisons of the Inquisition. In the underground dens in which men were immured, the gaolers were suffered, without interference, to deal with them as they would—to plunder, starve, maltreat, and torture them; as bad men would, into whose hands was committed absolute power. The prisoners were left without food; they were immured, in the severest weather, without fire; they were driven into the open court and forced to sleep there; they were beaten, huge weights were fastened to their limbs,



manacles were thrust on them. which wounded the flesh, the sores were left to fester and spread ; in this state of suffering they were plunged underground, and chained to the damp walls, with foul sewers running through their caverns ; and, as a new torment, the living victim was shut up in the same hole with the putrifying dead.


To this we may add the moral pollution ; the selling of spirits in the gaol ; the promiscuous intercourse and contamination of age and sex ; the garnish, the gambling, the fees ; the dismal rooms without chimney, without furniture, with earthen floors reeking with pestilence ; the accumulation of filth without sewerage ; the dungeons where felons were chained on mouldering straw, unable to raise themselves, dying by inches on the floor ; the cells in which men were packed, with no ventilation but a hole over the door, through which the poisoned air of the close passages might enter if it could ; where, in sickness and fever, men were kept till death, alone merciful, relieved them. These are some of the facts, and but a few, which marked the state of our gaols while Swift and Addison, Pope and Bolingbroke, were writing ; while the wits were meeting in their coffee-houses, courtiers trifled in St. James's, and Walpole and Pulteney contended for power in the House of Commons. But neither poetry nor politics, neither wits nor statesmen, grappled with this evil, known as it was to them by the Report of their Par-

liamentary Committees. The feelings of the House were roused indeed to such indignation, as to direct the officers of the gaols reported on to be arrested and prosecuted; but, these feelings satisfied, matters fell into their old train, offenders returned to their offences, and the gaols continued to be dens of infamy and suffering. We see in this instance, as in so many others, that it is not by the mandate of the great, but by the mission of the good, that inveterate wrongs are redressed, and deep-seated evils cured. For the long-neglected work, a missionary was now to be prepared.

CHAPTER II.

THE MISSIONARY.

THE great Missionary of English benevolence was born about the year 1725, in the neighbourhood of London. His father was a merchant, who made his money in his business, and invested part of it in the purchase of a farm in the village of Cardington in Bedfordshire. JOHN HOWARD was sickly in infancy, ailing in youth, and infirm throughout life. It was only by strict regimen that his health was maintained. His early training was religious: and his sweetness of temper, and the purity of his life, soon gave evidence of the principle which was implanted within. His education was imperfect. He was trained in a Dissenting school (his father being a Dissenter), and he appears to have owed little to that training. As soon as possible he was apprenticed to a wholesale grocer, in whose counting-house he learned habits of business, that were afterwards valuable. But on his father's death he discontinued the desk, and removed, where his health and tastes led




him, to the country. His first marriage, which was a singular one, was soon dissolved by his wife's death; and the wound inflicted on his affections, acting both on his sensibility and his health, led him to travel abroad. It was then, in the providence of God, that the seven years' war, which was raging between France and England, led to his captivity and confinement in the prisons of France. Thus he first tasted the horrors of a gaol.



In the year 1758 he was again married; and then, turned of thirty, with a partner of principles and tastes congenial with his own, he fixed his residence at the old farm-house at Cardington. Some years were spent there in domestic happiness, in beautifying the place of his abode, and in the pursuit of literature and art; for Howard's taste was great: he had a deep love of art: in his continental travels he had studied its highest models, and collected paintings to adorn his dwelling. His love of letters was great, so that he overcame many of the defects of his early education, and made himself (at least in modern languages) a proficient. He made observations in Natural History, became a Fellow of the Royal Society, and was twice a contributor to the pages of its Transactions. His love of architecture was shewn in the taste with which he improved his house; and his love of landscape, in the plantations with which he ornamented his domain; nor can we think without interest of the avenue which he planted, and under

whose shade he walked, in the converse of friends and the companionship of his own thoughts, which often turned to plans of earth, but still more frequently reverted to the higher interests of heaven ; for his walks, his chamber, and the quiet arbour in his garden, were the scenes of his religious struggles. There, in the privacy of his own thoughts, in the diligent and cherished study of the Bible, and in communion with God, he was undergoing the best, indeed the only effectual, preparation for the mission for which he was destined.

But during his retired life he was not inactive ; nor did his tastes interfere with his great calling of benevolence. In our age, the homes and habits of the poor receive, as they ought to do, the tending care of the rich. But in this work of social improvement, Howard set an example to his times ; and it is pleasant to find that example telling upon his neighbours, and followed by other gentlemen in the county. In his early youth, we find signs of the same benevolent taste. The daily loaf given with his own hands to the man who worked in his father's garden ; the furniture, when he broke up his household at Stoke Newington, given to the poor of the village, are early specimens of the tenderness of his heart. But when he settled himself in the quaint old farm-house at Cardington, he betook himself to his schemes of benevolence with a more organized and concentrated energy. He found the village of Car-




dington one of the most wretched of the rural villages of England—full of ill-built hovels, in which the peasantry were cribbed with little light and less air, with bad provision of water, and no drainage. Howard felt that the first step to improve the character was to raise the condition of the poor peasant. “He selected some plots of ground, on which he caused a number of very superior cottages to be built; and, as soon as these were ready, he transferred into them such persons as he most strongly approved of for tenants.” As he had many applicants, he was able to select; and his only requirements were habits of industry, temperance, and observance of the Sabbath. He let these cottages at the same rent for which the hovels on his estate had been let. It is pleasant to notice how entirely, in all these pursuits, he had the sympathy of his wife. If he was aided by her taste in laying out his own domain, he was no less aided by her spirit of self-sacrifice in his works of charity. It was his practice,—we note it for imitation,—(it was the practice also of a good and eminent physician lately deceased), to settle his yearly accounts with the accuracy of a merchant; but whatever balance of income remained, in place of setting this apart for accumulation, he placed it in the better investment of charity. On one occasion, soon after his marriage, he had proposed that this surplus should be spent in the recreation of a trip to London; but his wife suggested that the money would be just



sufficient to build another homestead for the poor. The trip was given up, and the cottage was built. Along with the cottages for the poor, he built schools, over which he watched with a most paternal care: schools of industry for the girls; schools of instruction for the boys. Howard regularly visited all the cottagers on his estate, entered their houses in the most familiar manner, interested himself in their humble affairs, listened to all their stories; helped, encouraged, and guided them. In the course of a very few years, from being one of the worst, Cardington became one of the most orderly and prosperous localities in the kingdom; the cottages of the poor were rendered neat, clean, and comfortable; the poor themselves, honest, sober, industrious, well-informed and religious. It was in the midst of the useful pursuits of this happy life that the blow came which withered Howard's earthly happiness, and left him again alone in the world.

"On Sunday, the 31st of March, 1765, Harriet Howard suddenly and unexpectedly died. On the foregoing Wednesday she had been delivered of her first and only child, a son. For several years they had been issueless; how fervently they had prayed for such a blessing as had now come to them, was not unknown to some of their more intimate friends. At length Heaven had heard their supplication, a man-child was vouchsafed to them; the circumstances attending Harriet's delivery, were not suggestive of more



than ordinary danger ; on the Sunday-morning she was thought beyond all risk. Howard went to church, as usual. Soon after his return she was seized with sudden illness, and in a very short time expired in his arms." *


Howard was calm and undemonstrative ; but his affections were deep ; and his love for his wife had been the deepest of all. He remained at Cardington for a year and a half in entire seclusion, but though he was outwardly calm, and really resigned, his health sunk under the effort. At the close of 1766, his medical attendant directed immediate change of air ; and a journey to Bath, London, and Holland, had the effect of soothing at least his feelings, and partially restoring his health. He then remained at home, whilst his child, the last object of his affections, was left to him ; but when the boy was removed to school, Cardington became intolerable to him, and he again went abroad. His great sorrow was indeed the beginning of his mission. But there are touching evidences how deep and constant was the wound. The day of his wife's death was kept by him evermore as a day of fasting and prayer ; every thing connected with her memory was sacred in his eyes.

"Many years after her demise, on the eve of his departure on one of his long and perilous journeys across the continent of Europe, he was walking in the

* Dixon's Life of Howard, p. 95.

gardens with the son whose birth had cost the precious life, examining some plantations which they had recently been making, and arranging a plan for future improvements. On coming to the planted walk he stood still,—there was a pause in the conversation,—the old man's thoughts were busy with the past; at length he broke silence. 'Jack,' said he, in a tender and solemn tone, 'in case I should not come back, you will pursue this work or not, as you may think proper: but remember, this walk was planted by your mother, and if you ever touch a twig of it, may my blessing never rest upon you!'"

The training of Howard's mind for his great mission of self-sacrifice continued for some time: it was in the spring of 1765 that this blighting affliction fell upon him. For eighteen months he lived in retirement; and for nearly four years he continued a traveller abroad; visiting for health the milder air of Italy, and travelling at various seasons of the year through Holland and France. His former journeys, however animated by Christian feeling, had been diversified by the pursuits of taste; but in this journey, under the deep shadow of his affliction, his mind was walking in that concentrated communion with God which was to prepare him for his mission of good to man. The memoranda which have been preserved of this period, and some fragments of his letters to his friends, give us an instructive insight into the workings of his mind.



"Nov. 30, 1769.—My return without seeing the southern parts of Italy was on much deliberation, as I feared a misimprovement of a talent spent for mere curiosity, at the loss of many Sabbaths, and as many donations must be suspended for my pleasure, which would have been, as I hope, contrary to the general conduct of my life, and which, on a retrospective view on a death-bed, would cause pain as unbecoming a disciple of Christ, whose mind should be formed in my soul. These thoughts, with distance from my dear boy, determined me to check my curiosity and be on my return. Oh ! why should vanity and folly, pictures and baubles—or even the stupendous mountains, beautiful hills, or rich valleys, which ere long will all be consumed—engross the thoughts of a candidate for an everlasting kingdom. Look forward, oh ! my soul. How low, how mean, how little is everything but what has a view to that glorious world of light, and life, and love ! ”

And again :—

“ Endeavour, oh ! my soul, to cultivate and maintain a thankful, serious, humble, and resigned frame and temper of mind. Consider the everlasting worth of spiritual and divine enjoyments ; then wilt thou see the vanity and nothingness of worldly pleasures. Oh ! my soul, stand in awe and sin not ; daily pray fervently for restraining grace. My soul, as such a frame is thy delight, pray frequently and fervently to the Father of

spirits, to bless his word in thy retired moments to thy serious conduct in life. Stop ; remember thou art a candidate for eternity ; daily, fervently pray for wisdom : lift up thy heart and eyes unto the Rock of ages, and then look down upon the glory of this world. A little while longer and thy journey will be ended—duty is thine, though the power is God's When I consider, and look into my heart, I doubt, I tremble : so vile a creature—sin, folly, and imperfection in every action ! Yet, my soul, why art thou cast down ? hope in God, and in His free grace in Jesus Christ. ' Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief ! ' Oh ! compassionate and divine Redeemer, save me from the dreadful guilt and power of sin, and accept of my solemn, free, and I trust, unreserved surrender of my soul, my spirit, my dear child, all I own and have, into Thy hands."

Again he writes :—

" I hope my present journey, though again into Italy, is no way wrong ; rejoicing if in any respect I could bring back the least improvement that might be of use to my own country. Very desirous I am of returning with a right spirit, not only wiser but better, with a cheerful humility, more general love and benevolence to my fellow-creatures, watchful of my thoughts, my words, my actions, resigned to the will of God, that I may walk with God, and lead a more useful and honourable life in this world ? "

CHAPTER III.

THE WORK BEGUN.

IT was in this temper, thus purified by the discipline of more than seven years of seclusion and sorrow, that Howard, at the age of 45, returned to execute the mission for which God had been preparing him. He was called to it by an act then unusual,—by his appointment, though a Dissenter, to the office of High Sheriff of his county. It was while sitting as High Sheriff at Bedford that he inspected the gaol. Not a cell in the prison escaped his notice,—not an abuse passed unobserved. The under-ground dungeons on the damp floor of which the felons were laid; the fees demanded by the gaoler, and in default of which, men acquitted, or whose sentence had expired, were kept in gaol; all these acts of injustice were brought under his review, as he inspected his county-gaol. In such a heart the fire was soon kindled: he set himself to correct the immediate evils of the prison. It was there that Bunyan had lain a prisoner, and prepared, in the lonely hours

of twelve years' captivity, his immortal work. In that same prison Howard discovered the calling to which he gave up his life. He proceeded from thence to inspect the other prisons of England, and to see if they were like his own. He travelled to every county; no dungeon so loathsome, or so concealed, that he did not visit it: disease, which frightened both gaoler and physician, had no terrors for him; atmosphere so foul, that the keepers thrust into it from a distance the food of the captive, was braved by him; dying men, wan, worn, chained, and tortured, in darkness, in filth, in vapours insupportable, heard a strange voice, and saw the unwonted looks of this missionary of mercy. Gaolers, who had continued from one to the other their reign of oppression,—had braved with impunity, now for half a century, the enquiries and threats of the House of Commons,—found themselves overawed by this man, who, with a gentleness which nothing could vex, but a firmness which nothing could bend, forced his way into every prison: and by the authority of his character, without order from Parliament or from the Secretary of State, laid bare all the abuses. In his first tour, he travelled many hundred miles, at a time when journeys were not made as now,—but with extreme labour,—on horseback, exposed to every inclemency of weather,—yet in that first tour he traversed half England. This occupied him till the end of 1773; but the effect of his enquiries was decisive. Already one of the

members of the House of Commons had, in the beginning of that year, introduced a bill to prohibit the exactions of the gaolers, and to secure the inspection of the gaols. The Bill, however, had been withdrawn ; but in the interval, Howard's tour of inspection took place ; his array of facts was mustered ; he was summoned to the bar of the House. His earnest statement was heard ; he received, what was creditable to the House, their thanks ; he had a higher reward in the passing of the Bill in March 1774. Thus in this month of bitter memories, after the lapse of nine years, the first fruits of that harvest with a view to which his merciful God had afflicted him, began to be gathered.

His work, however, was only commenced. No sooner did he escape from the bar of the House of Commons, than he dived into the various prisons in London. He then hurried to the North of England ; passed into Wales and some of the Midland counties ; then we find him in the South ; then plunging again into London, discovering the abominations of the Fleet, and of several minor prisons ; then inspecting prisons in Wales, in some of the counties of the West, in Devonshire and in Cornwall, and closing his enquiries in the South and South East of England, after a tour of many hundred miles, and the inspection of upwards of fifty prisons.


In the end of that year, (for spheres of labour opened rapidly, and events which illustrate many lives, were crowded into months), he was induced to stand as one of

the popular candidates for the town of Bedford. Bribery, and the influence of the Corporation, defeated his colleague and himself: but the case was brought before a Committee of the House, and even in those days, when committees were not scrupulous, the state of the poll was reversed, and it seemed likely that Howard would be seated with Mr. Whitbread as member for Bedford. But the providence of God decided that his great mission should not be so marred. The scrutiny (whether fairly or unfairly, is not worth our enquiry) ended in seating Mr Whitbread, but in excluding Howard from the House of Commons. He was to influence its decisions in other ways; by his personal researches, and by the writings in which he has recorded them. He felt the defeat keenly; a letter to one of his friends shews this; but still he felt it as a Christian, and he turned forthwith to resume his more important labours. In the interval between the election and the Committee, he had inspected the prisons of five counties of England; and, though then in the depth of winter, he had extended his researches both to Scotland and Ireland. It is probable that, had he been returned to Parliament, he would have given to the world the result of his labours in the imperfect state which they had then reached. But, having now leisure, he used it to extend his enquiries. In April 1775 he went to the Continent—to France first, then to Flanders and Holland, where he found a marked superiority over Eng-

land, both in the state of the prisons, and in the criminal law; then to Germany, where he found many flagrant evils. Thence he returned to England in the latter part of the year. Seven months were spent in examining those petty gaols in his own country, which had before escaped his notice; and then, still unsatisfied, and feeling the inadequacy of his researches, he returned to the Continent, inspected the better prisons and gentler code of Switzerland; studied every work, whether of France or Italy, of Montesquieu, Beccaria, or Blackstone, which gave juster views of a more merciful penal code: ransacked once more, for further illustration, some of the provincial and metropolitan prisons of England: and at last, in the beginning of 1777, after nearly four years of continuous labour, after travelling more than 13,000 miles, incurring toil which it is hard now to realize, and hazards* which none but himself would have braved, he proceeded (no easy task) to reduce to order, and to condense, his materials, so as to publish them to the world. For this purpose he went to Warrington, where there was at that time a printing-press of some note, and where he could have the literary assistance of Dr. Aikin, who was practising in that place as a surgeon.


* What these hazards were we may learn from Dr. Duntze, a medical man, whom Howard saw at Bremen, who told him, that having visited the Fleet prison many years before, the friend who accompanied him had died of jail fever, and he himself had been severely ill.

“Some details of his way of living while at Warrington have been preserved; which, as they were of a kind with his usual habits, are not unworthy of record. Every morning, though it was then in the depth of a severe winter, he rose at two o’clock precisely, washed, performed his orisons, and then worked at his papers until seven, when he breakfasted and dressed for the day. Punctually at eight he repaired to the printing-office, to inspect the progress of his sheets through the press. There he remained until one, when the compositors went to dinner. While they were absent, he would walk to his lodgings; and putting some bread and dried fruit into his pocket, sally out for his customary exercise, generally a stroll in the suburbs of the town, eating, as he trudged along, his hermit fare; and drinking therewith a glass of cold water, begged at some cottage door. This was his only dinner. By the time that the printers returned to the office, he had usually, but not always, wandered back; sometimes he would call upon a friend on his way, and spend an hour or two in pleasant chat; a recreation he rather liked; for, though anything but a gossip, he had all the social instincts largely developed in his nature. At the press he remained until the men left off their days’ toil; and then retired to his modest lodgings, took a simple dish of tea or coffee, performed his household religious services (a sacred duty which he never, under any circumstances, whether at home or abroad, suf-



ferred himself to omit) and retired to rest at an early hour."

His practice in his journeys was similar. In the ten thousand miles that he travelled in the United Kingdom, accompanied by his trusty esquire John Prole, he generally rode at the rate of about forty miles a-day, carrying in his wallet some dried biscuit, and supplying himself with a draught of milk or water from the cottages which he passed. His habits of severe temperance were the great preservatives, under God, from the contagion to which he was constantly exposed. "Next to the free goodness and mercy of the Author of my being," he says, when asked how he kept himself free from infection, "temperance and cleanliness are my preservatives. Trusting in Divine Providence, and believing myself in the way of my duty, I visit the most noxious cells; and while thus employed I fear no evil." On this system he ate no flesh, drank neither wine nor spirits, ate little and at fixed periods, bathed daily in cold water, rose early, and retired early to rest. But with this asceticism nothing of narrowness was mixed, nor was there anything unsociable in his tender and genial nature. His steady love for his old friends of Bedfordshire appears in many touching instances through his correspondence. Though far away, he still thought of his humble cottagers. For the children of his school he had always a particular affection, and his intercourse with them was gentle, grave,




and thoughtful. For the children of his friends he brought home frequent remembrances,—fruit from the country, foreign toys from his tours ; and in his quaint fashion, he preserved himself from all suspicion of parsimony at the inns which he visited, ordering his dinner as if he lived on the same dainties as others, and letting his servant enjoy the banquet, whilst he confined himself to his hermit-fare.



CHAPTER IV.


THE SOURCES OF POWER.

BUT with all these external rules, we have evidence that the great work in his own heart was steadily progressive. Thence flowed the motives which gave impulse to his life. The daily study of Scripture; the hours of morning and evening retirement; the rising up long before day to pray; the deep reverence for the Sabbath; the value for religious ordinances; the severe review of his own acts; the depth of his humble faith,—these rise upon us from time to time, and reveal to us the secret source of all that life of virtue and toil. Every stroke of sorrow or suffering only served, as it was designed, to deepen these sentiments. The accident which he had at the Hague in 1778, which brought on fever and great pain; his illness in France; drew from him, in the confidence of his own journal, such remarks as these: “Do me good, O God, by this painful affliction; may I see the great uncertainty of health, ease, and comfort,—that “all my




springs are in thee." May I be more thankful if restored to health ; more compassionate towards others, and more absolutely devoted to God." Such were the secret sources of his wonderful efforts ; nor is it well, while we recognize that transcendent feature of his character, which has procured him the surname of benevolent, to leave out of view those other qualities, each separately great, which made up a character of such beautiful proportions, and such exquisite grace ; for, distinguished as he was for benevolence, he was not less remarkable for constancy of purpose, and a perseverance, which no difficulties could abate or exhaust ; for a courage which no fear of man, or of death itself, could shake ; and for that, which grew naturally out of his other qualities, a quiet and self-relying dignity, by the authority of which he made all men bend to him—officials in their pride of office ; petty tyrants in the gaols which they mis-governed ; malefactors in their cells or in the recklessness of their crimes ; kings, popes, and emperors on their thrones. With all these, in the course of his wanderings, this fearless man came into contact, and all these he subdued by the power of his character. There never was so universal or so enviable a dominion.


Let us give our readers a few specimens. At an early period of his history, he forced his way into the prisons, which were kept as great State secrets, inaccessible to all. In Prussia, Frederick the Great, with



all his vices, honoured his character, and threw his prison of Spandau open for his inspection. Catherine of Russia, then in the height of her evil power, sought to see him, but was sternly refused ; he came, he said, to comfort the poor, not to visit the great. Not the less did the haughty Empress throw open to him all her prisons ; while her nobles, turning from their ordinary pursuits of courtiers, paid homage to his virtues. Still more was his reception by Joseph II. of Austria indicative of his influence. In one of his first visits to Vienna, at a time when Joseph, vain of his innovations and institutions, exacted from every one a tribute of flattery, Howard did not hesitate, at the table of the English ambassador, and in the presence of the Austrian nobility, to denounce the state of the prisons as disgraceful. "Hush," said the terrified ambassador, "your words will be reported to the Emperor." "What," he answered, "shall my tongue be tied from speaking the truth, by any king or emperor in the world ? I repeat what I have asserted, and I will maintain its veracity." In a subsequent visit of his, the Emperor besought an interview. His wily minister, Prince Kaunitz, found out Howard in his obscure lodging, where he sought to remain unknown, and communicated his master's wish. But Howard replied, that he would have waited upon his Majesty, had he not arranged to leave Vienna early the following morning. In vain did the minister assure




him that every court ceremony would be waived, and that the Emperor would receive him at the earliest hour he pleased to fix in the morning. It was only when the English ambassador, Sir Robert Keith, his valued friend, interposed, that Howard yielded; and then only when to the characteristic question, "Can I do any good by going?" he was assured that his visit could not fail to be of use. When they met in the Emperor's cabinet—where, during the two hours' conversation, both stood—the Emperor sunk into a school-boy before the authority of the fearless Englishman. When asked his opinion of the Austrian prisons, and the Emperor's pet hospital, Howard exposed, without shrinking, their defects. The conversation turned on the work-houses, and he spoke with equally blunt exposure; when the Emperor tried one final boast, the firm philanthropist crushed it by an allusion which at once subdued him. Still so evident was his earnestness, that, at parting, the proud descendant of the house of Hapsburg pressed his hand, and thanked him repeatedly for his visit and advice. Howard's treatment of the Austrian nobility was like his dealing with their ruler. Those indeed who valued virtue, valued him. There is a touching instance of a Russian general, who, having, with a princely liberality, endowed a number of charities, received from his countrymen a gold medal; but, he said, his services to mankind reached only his own country; there was one whose services reached all.




mankind ; to him, his master in benevolence, he should send the medal. But when selfish courtiers visited him, as they did in Austria, because he was the fashion, he dismissed them with characteristic bluntness. To a Count who was appointed Governor of Upper Austria, and his Countess, who asked him about the prisons of their province, he replied, "They are the very worst in all Germany, particularly in the condition of the female prisoners ; and I recommend your Countess here to visit them personally, as the best means of rectifying their abuses." And when she flung out of the room in a passion, he added, "Remember, Madam, that you are yourself but a woman, and must soon, like the most miserable female prisoner in a dungeon, inhabit only a small space of that earth from which you are equally sprung."

But his power over the lowest and the worst was as great as over the highest. A man of the name of Ryland, condemned to die for forgery, had carried away from her friends a girl, of whom no trace could be found ; and refused, on the eve of his execution, to give any information respecting her. After all efforts were exhausted, the friends applied to Howard, who, with quiet confidence in his power over the minds of others, told them he would bring back an account of the girl's situation in four-and-twenty hours ; and he did so. At another time, during a visit to London, a riot took place in the military prison of the Savoy ; and the




200 prisoners, having killed their keepers, made themselves masters of the prison, and defied attack. When Howard heard of it, he hastened to the prison, and, undeterred by the entreaties of his friends, or the warnings of the terrified gaolers, he entered the prison unarmed and alone. How he charmed the mutineers, we are not told; they gave him their list of grievances, and suffered themselves to be conducted quietly to their cells.—But his courage was yet more singularly tried. In one of his later voyages from Smyrna to the Morea, the vessel in which he sailed was attacked by a Barbary privateer. The Venetian sailors were few in number, and their arms were bad. Howard had never seen a battle, but he girt himself for this with the coolness of a man who had been a soldier from a boy. There was one gun of large calibre on board, and though probably he had never even fired a rifle in his life, of this gun he assumed the direction; he rammed it almost to the muzzle with nails, spikes, and similar charge, and then steadily waiting his opportunity, as the privateer bore down upon them, apparently expecting the Venetians to strike their flag, he sent the contents in among them with such murderous effect, that, after a moment or two of consternation, the corsairs hoisted sail, and made off at their best speed.

There was the same quiet firmness in all his proceedings. Whether he had to do with the 300 Dutch prisoners, whom our Government tried to seduce into



their service, but whom he rescued, discomfiting the scheme ; or with the negligent surgeon of the hospital ship at Portsmouth, whose dismissal he secured ; or the *bon-vivant* monks whom he terrified into propriety ; or the Spanish gaolers, whose doors he forced open, or those of Ghent, who admitted him, as one, they said, who was above all rules ; or the officials of the Inquisition, whose prisons he entered, to the astonishment of all ; or the Knights of Malta, with their Grand Master, whom he rebuked ; or the executioner of St. Petersburg, whom he compelled to confess his secret orders by the mere authority of his manner ; or the insolent courtiers of Frederick the Great, whom he subdued to his will ;—in all cases the ascendancy of his pure and powerful character made itself felt, and ensured his success. But, with these proofs of his indomitable resolution, there come, like lights across the graver parts of the picture, signs of the tenderness of his affection. He brought, often with much personal trouble, proofs of his remembrance from the continent to his female friends. We have his letters to his friends at Cardington, written, throughout his wanderings, sometimes in sorrow, sometimes in joy, but always full of affection ; and if any one would see this side of his character, he should turn to the note which he wrote, while immured in the Lazaretto at Venice. Suffering from weariness, sickness, and the most poignant affliction, he writes to his trusty bailiff on all his Car-



dington affairs ; the rent of his farm and cottages, the neatness of the lanes, work to be given to the poor, Christmas gifts for the widows, rewards for deserving families, a boy and girl to be apprenticed, some currants sent from the Ionian Islands as a treat for the poor. Even his old chaise-horse is not forgotten ; “ he must have his range when past his labour ! ”


CHAPTER V.

A NEW MISSION.

BUT we must resume the drama of this remarkable life, for we now reach one of its most singular scenes. His work on prisons being now published, and the gaols of England much improved ; a general impulse to prison reform having spread from Rome to Norway, and from the Spanish Peninsula to the remote cities of Russia ; his name recognized as the friend of the friendless, wherever the language of civilized man was spoken—it might have been thought that Howard would have rested from his labours, and have given the evening of his life to the retirement of the country, and the society of his friends. No man had tastes better suited to both, and for a moment such seems to have been his purpose.* When he retired, in the spring of 1794, to Cardington, he was 58 years of age. He had spent twelve of the maturest years of his life in his great work ; travelled above 42,000 miles ; and consumed in travel, or in relieving the sick and the prisoner, £30,000 ! But by such a man, with so great a mission, ease and

* Brown's Life of Howard, p. 394.


rest were not to be endured. It is interesting to observe how, as one field of duty is traversed, another and yet another opens to a mind in earnest. Howard had first learned the need of his interposition in prisons, while a prisoner in France, and in his functions as Sheriff of Bedfordshire. It was in one of his voyages, when inspecting prisons, that a new sphere of labour opened to him. Sailing from Civita Vecchia to Leghorn, along that pleasant coast, he was overtaken by one of those storms which prevail in the Mediterranean. Hardly escaping with life, exhausted and drenched, Howard with the crew reached the harbour of one of the islands which fringe the Tuscan coast. But, when they were about to land, they were driven off. A rumour had risen that the ship had touched a country infested by plague, and the rumour was sufficient. Drifted by the storm, and thrown upon the coast of Africa, they were again repelled by the same terrible report; and it was only at last on an island, where the rumour had not reached, that they found an hospitable harbour. When reflecting, in the calmness of his retirement, on this strange incident of his travels, he resolved to investigate that mysterious disease, which seemed to terrify all races; to examine the Lazarettos, and ascertain whether due provision was made for the comfort of those immured in them; to go to the seat of the plague, trace the nature of its progress, and endeavour to find a remedy.



No more hazardous mission had ever been projected. He had braved the gaol-fever; but the plague was an enemy still more fearful. In his former journeys he had taken with him a trusty servant; in this he would expose no life but his own, and he went alone.

We cannot refuse our readers, at the outset of this strange mission, the notice of a characteristic incident, which shews his fearless daring. He wished to inspect the Lazaretto of Marseilles, from which he hoped to receive important suggestions; and he applied to the French Government for permission, through the Foreign Secretary. But the Government of Louis XVI. had taken great offence at the information which Howard had published respecting the Bastille, and the answer sent to him was a prohibition, not only to visit the Lazaretto, but to enter France. Howard was not deterred. Any other person would have said, a failure was certain. To ensure it, the French Government, aware of his character, employed a spy at the Hague, where he then was, to track his movements; and accompanied by this spy, though unconscious of the fact, he entered France. A casual circumstance prevented for a night his arrest in Paris; he left it in safety; travelled to Lyons and Marseilles; remained in the former city some days, in the latter long enough to examine the Lazaretto and to obtain plans and drawings of it; and then, after four days at Toulon, tracked by agents and in the midst of perils, he escaped safely by

sea to Nice. We know of no more beautiful instance of the inflexible firmness of man in the path of duty, and of the care and encompassing Providence of God. It was in this voyage that Howard inspected the Lazaretto of Malta and the Hospitals of the Knights, and administered to their Grand Master the rebuke to which we have alluded. Zante then received him; and at last he stood in Asia, in the city of Smyrna, and in the heart of the plague! Here he presented himself as a physician, a title which opened all places to his approach. During his stay the plague broke out in a virulent form; and without fear he entered the dwellings, and touched the persons of the stricken, the dying, and the dead! The people of Smyrna avoided him; he alone walked unharmed. From Smyrna he passed to Constantinople, and spent a month there, visiting prisons, hospitals, and pest-houses. Such was the hazard to his life, that he declined the hospitable offer of the English Ambassador to give him a home at his palace: he would expose no life but his own. He went where neither physician nor dragoman would accompany him, —into scenes of inexpressible horror. His only warning that he was mortal, was a scorching pain across the temples; but an hour's fresh air seemed always to remove it. The Turks regarded him with amazement, and with a mysterious interest, while he passed through his work, as if it were the common business of ordinary life. He was about to return from these dangers, when



he felt that, for improving the quarantine system of his country, a more practical knowledge was necessary: he must himself learn the life of a Lazaretto. At once he proceeded to act. He hastened to Asia Minor; returned to Smyrna, where the plague was raging: and threw himself into an infected vessel, bound for the Adriatic. It was during that voyage that the encounter took place with the pirates. After this escape he entered the Lazaretto of Venice, to suffer a personal martyrdom of forty days.

Here three blows fell upon him. The one, a severe trial to his modest and shrinking nature, was a proposal from England, to erect a statue in his honour; * this news gave him the intensest pain: his letters to all his friends show how deeply he was wounded. At his peremptory demand, the plan was abandoned.

The second blow was sickness, which sent him from the Lazaretto shattered, and a prey to intermittent fever. But there was a heavier blow than these. It is one of the mysteries of our history on earth, that the Christian parent is sometimes to have children the very opposite to himself; as in the case of the good Lord Lyttleton, the wickedness of whose son shortened his life. Howard's case was as striking. The child of so

* He said to one friend, "I must always view with pain and abhorrence, every attempt of my friends to bring me forward to public view or apprehension." To Prince Kaunitz, who said a statue would be erected to him in the prison of Vienna, he said; "I have no objection to its being erected where it shall be invisible."

many tears and prayers, who had cost the life of one parent, and filled so many tender and anxious thoughts of the other, turned out a confirmed profligate: and, driven by debauchery to madness, died at last, some years after his father, a confirmed maniac. His habits of vice had been for some time before this established; but it was only during Howard's confinement in the Lazaretto, that the intelligence of his son's misconduct reached him. It was a dreary period, these forty long days in November 1786. Sick in body and agonized in spirit, he had to reckon the weary hours. "I am much reduced," he says, "by fatigue of body and mind." Still, his faith and his patience did not forsake him. "I have great reason to bless God that my steadiness of resolution does not forsake me in so many solitary hours. What I suffered in the Lazaretto I am persuaded I should have disregarded, as I gained useful information; Venice is the mother of all Lazarettos—but oh! my son, my son!" The blow was still more poignant when he was able to return to England, which he reached early in February, 1787, and where he found his son in a state of raving insanity. Every thing, which affection could suggest, had already been done for him; but the father, hopeful still in his agony, would not have him shut up in an asylum; but, trusting that the home of his infancy and its familiar scenes might tranquillize his mind, he fixed him at Cardington, under suitable care. The physicians, in pity to his feelings,

held out to him some hope of cure, but assured him that it must be a work of time ; and to occupy his mind during that interval, he proceeded to take a final inspection of the gaols of his own country. He devoted to this more than a year and a half, traversing England, Ireland and Scotland, and including poor-houses as well as prisons, in his investigation, labouring without intermission, and giving to the public, in the end of 1788, his last remarks on the prisons of England, and his great work on the Lazarettos of Europe. His son's disease meanwhile had strengthened instead of abating, and it became absolutely necessary to place him in an asylum.

“ His removal from Cardington enabled Howard to revisit it once more. With a mournful tenderness the old man now re-trod the scenes of so much happiness and so much sorrow. The last terrible affliction had opened all his former wounds afresh ; and in the closing scenes of his laborious life, he saw the clouds gathering darkly from every quarter of the horizon. This was his last leave-taking of his favourite home. He took a tender interest in going for the last time over the grounds which he had trodden in happier years : in standing in the silence of evening beside the grave of his wife : in thinking over all those schemes which young and happy lovers build for themselves in the future. Standing one evening with his old gardener, in the grounds behind his house, he observed, in a tone tremulous with emo-

tion, that, after many years of planning and altering, he had at length got every thing into the state which his wife would have best liked, and now he was about to leave it for ever ! ”

He did not, however, neglect his active duties. He made provision in his will for the education of the villagers of Cardington ; for the poor of that place, and of the village where he was married ; and for a certain number of poor debtors and prisoners. He visited every cottage, gave a present to each family, and left with them the words of a father's counsel. He settled his steward in a farm ; and made his wife's favourite maid, a present of the cherished miniature of her former mistress. To his country he bequeathed, in the work which he published, the result of his labours ; and with the statement to his readers that he was again about to revisit the East, he added the entreaty, “ that they would not impute this to rashness or enthusiasm, but to the serious and deliberate conviction that he was pursuing the path of duty.” The motto prefixed to his work was, “ O let the sorrowful sighing of the prisoners come before Thee.” And on the back of the title-page he added the eloquent words of Cicero, “ Nihil est tam regium, tam liberale, tamque munificum, quam opem ferre supplicibus, excitare afflictos, dare salutem, liberare periculis homines.” *

His diary refers to the secret springs of his fearless

John Howard's Life, p. 519.



energies; "Courage and humanity," he says, "are inseparable friends." "The truest pleasures arise from extensive benevolence."

"Christ has made poverty and meanness, joined with holiness, to be a state of dignity."


"Ease, affluence, and honours, are temptations, which the world holds out:—on the other hand, fatigue, poverty, suffering, and danger, with an approving conscience; O God, my heart is fixed, trusting in Thee!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE CLOSE.

FROM his intimate friends, Howard did not disguise his conviction, when he entered upon this last journey, that he should see them again no more. In truth it was not the age which he had reached, now sixty-three, but the shocks and toils and sorrows of an arduous life, and last of all the wearing anguish of every-day suffering for his son, which had sapped the strength of a constitution always delicate. The wonder is that it had endured so much.

"You may probably," he said, "never see me again; but, be that as it may, it is not matter of serious concern to me whether I lay down my life in Turkey, in Egypt, in Asia Minor, or elsewhere; my whole endeavour is to fulfil, according to the ability of so weak an instrument, the will of that gracious Providence who has condescended to raise in me a firm persuasion that I am employed in what is consonant to his Divine will. The way to Heaven from Grand Cairo is as near as from London."



Or as he says in the confidence of his journal,* "I am a stranger and pilgrim here: but I trust, through grace, going to a land peopled with my fathers and my kindred and the family of my youth. And I trust my spirit will mingle with those pious dead, and be for ever with the Lord."


On the 5th of July, 1789, he left England, and proceeded through Germany and Prussia into Russia. From Moscow he wrote to a friend telling him that his medical acquaintance gave him little hope of escaping the plague in Turkey, but that his spirits did not fail him. He was then engaged in inspecting the military hospitals of Russia, which were in a fearful state; and in endeavouring to obtain a mitigation of that cruel system by which recruits were swept from all parts of that enormous empire, hurried by forced marches over bad roads, ill clothed and fed, till thousands sickened and died.

In the course of this enquiry, Howard reached the town of Cherson. Cherson was then filled, for it was mid-winter, with the Imperial troops, who had just taken the fortress of Bender from the Turks, and were in winter quarters, spending their time in triumph and gaiety. There also was Prince Potemkin, the princely and profligate favourite of Catherine. There tidings reached Howard, which gave him sincere joy—not the fall of Bender, but the fall of the Bastille; the ruins

* Brown's Life, p. 584.

of which he promised himself the pleasure of one day visiting. But in the midst of the Christmas festivities a virulent fever broke out in Cherson, which seized, among others, a young lady resident twenty-four miles from the place, but who had been attending its balls and parties. Her fever soon becoming serious, Howard, whose medical skill was known, was entreated, and after long resistance was prevailed on, to visit her. His remedies were successful, and the fever abated. He requested that, if there was a relapse, he might be immediately informed. The relapse occurred, but the letter miscarried, and did not reach him for more than a week. It found him at the house of his friend, the Russian Admiral of the Black Sea fleet.

"Although when the note came to hand it was a cold, wintry, tempestuous night, with the rain falling in torrents, he did not hesitate for a moment about setting off for her residence; as no post horses could be found, he mounted a dray-horse used in the Admiral's family for carrying water, whose slow pace protracted the journey until he was saturated with wet and benumbed with cold. He arrived also to find his patient dying; yet not willing to see her expire without a struggle to save her, he administered some medicines to excite perspiration, and remained for some hours at her side to watch the first signs of the effect produced. After a time he thought the dose was beginning to operate, and, wishing to avoid exposing her to the chance of a



fresh cold by uncovering her arms, placed his hand under the coverlet to feel her pulse ; on raising it up a little, a most offensive smell escaped from beneath the clothes, and Howard always thought the infection was then communicated to him. Next day she died ! ” *


The effects were soon seen, though at first Howard attributed them to fatigue. But a violent fever soon declared itself. His favourite remedy, which he applied, had no effect. On the 12th and 17th of January, alarming fits, shewing that the brain was affected, came on ; and though all the medical skill of Cherson flocked to his assistance, he became weaker from day to day. But his mind remained at peace, and on the 15th we have this touching evidence of it in his Journal ;

“ I am faint and low, yet, I trust, in the right way, —pursuing, though too apt to forget my Almighty Friend and God. O my soul, remember and record how often God has sent an answer of peace, mercies in the most seasonable times ; how often better than thy fears, exceeded thy expectations : why should I distrust this good and faithful God ? ”

On the morning of the 20th his friend, Admiral Priestman, not having seen him for some days, and alarmed at the circumstance, came to visit him. He found him sitting at a small stove in his bed-room, weak and low, dwelling on his death, which he felt to be near. To an attempt to rouse him from depression

* Dixon's Life of Howard.

by changing the subject, he answered, "Priestman, you style this a dull conversation, and endeavour to divert my mind from dwelling on the thought of death, but I entertain very different sentiments. Death has no terrors for me; it is an event I always look to with cheerfulness, if not with pleasure; and be assured the subject is more grateful to me than any other." He then told him that, living as he had done for years on vegetables and water, a little bread and a little tea, he had no means of lowering his diet, "therefore I must die;" and he added, smiling, "it is only such jolly fellows as you, Priestman, who get over these fevers;" and then with perfect serenity he expressed to his friend his wishes for his burial. "There is a spot near the village of Dauphing, that would suit me nicely. You know it well, for I have often said that I should like to be buried there; and let me beg of you, as you value your old friend, not to suffer any pomp to be used at my funeral; nor let any monument, nor monumental inscription whatsoever, be made to mark where I am laid; but lay me quietly in the earth, place a sun-dial over my grave, and let me be forgotten." His friend, unaware that the danger was so great, was unwilling to leave Howard, in order to fulfil what he thought the odd request that he would obtain leave for his burial in the spot which he had named; but, as usual, Howard prevailed, and during his absence there arrived (a touching instance of the tender care of his Heavenly Father,)




a letter from England, giving him improved intelligence of his son, and hopes of his recovery. "His eye brightened, and he spoke of his child with the tenderness and affection of a mother; bidding his servant tell him when he returned, how long and fervently he had prayed for his recovery, especially during his last illness. When Admiral Priestman returned, he took the letter from his bosom, and gave it to him to read: saying—and they were his last words—'Is not this comfort for a dying father?'" After this he fell into a state of slumber, from which he passed into his eternal rest.

With what a shock that death fell upon the vast empire in which, rude as were the peasants, all had learned to regard Howard as their friend; with what a band of weeping mourners, 3000 persons of every rank,—from the prince and admiral to the common sailor, and soldier, and peasant,—his body was carried to the grave; with what a thrill of sorrow these tidings were borne across the Continent to every country which he had visited and befriended, and came at last with concentrated force on England, which had fully learned the value of this her noblest son, his biographers have truly recorded. Yet, in the sunset of so glorious a life, we must not forget, in our personal admiration, the deeper, and to us the practical lesson, that these qualities, splendid as they were, and these virtues of rare lustre, were given him by the same great Spirit whose influences are open to all who will seek them by the

means which Howard faithfully used, and in the path which he so perseveringly trod.

There perhaps never was a season in our history in which men's minds were better prepared to take the benefit of Howard's example ; and there never was a time at which it was more needed ; for of this all must be persuaded, that unless the laity of England address themselves earnestly to the great duty of befriending the poor, there will fall upon us the visitation which will chastise our neglect. The particular mode in which this chastisement may come, I do not presume to state. None can look on the disordered state of the masses of our population, stimulated by strong appeals, fretted by sore privations, and crowded together in increasing numbers, without seeing around them the materials for that chastisement, and the element of revolutions. How fierce these have been on the Continent, we know ; how far more serious they might prove among ourselves, with denser numbers and a far more accumulated capital, all may discern. There is time yet, as we verily believe, for averting, through the help of God, these great social dangers ; but the time must be well employed. The work is a great one. It is to be done, however, not by one great movement, but by a number of *self-denying acts* ; we are not to look for it from Parliament, but from ourselves : it lies at our own door, and each one may set himself to do it in his own sphere. That sphere may



not be wide and splendid as Howard's, —it may be the sphere of a district, a neighbourhood, or a parish, — but if each, who has the means, will use them, it will be done;—done with a blessing to many, with good to ourselves, and with great public service; and the men, who do this work, will be in their degree, like Howard, the benefactors of their age.



Second Sketch.

THE QUAKERISM OF ENGLAND.

For this sketch I have consulted "FOX'S JOURNAL;" Marsden's "HISTORY OF THE PURITANS;" "ELLWOOD'S MEMOIRS;" "PENNINGTON'S LETTERS;" "LIFE OF MILTON;" Lipscomb's "HISTORY OF BUCKS;" Neale's "HISTORY OF THE PURITANS;" Grahame's "HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES."

Section First.

GEORGE FOX.

CHAPTER I.

THE CRADLE OF ENGLISH QUAKERISM.

THE controversies of the day have brought Quakerism anew into notice, and have led us to ask, how it came among us, and what uses it has served. It always held a certain estimation, from the activity and integrity of its members. It has rendered, in many instances, important service to the cause of Philanthropy. No one can read of the emancipation of the slaves, without thinking of Clarkson ; nor of prisons, without recalling Mrs. Fry ; nor of education, without remembering William Allen ; nor of benevolence, without having before him the charities of the Gurneys.

Nor does the history of Quakerism, when retraced by us, fail to shew its purpose. That sect embodied in a

singular degree the virtues of Englishmen, their courage and indomitable patience, their constancy, perseverance, and love of truth,—virtues by which, in England, we have obtained most of the rights which are prized by us, and which are still sought in other countries in vain. To the resolution and strong will of the Quakers we owe one of the greatest of our rights, freedom of conscience and religious liberty, without which civil liberty is a name. The peculiarities of the Quaker faith and deportment ought not to blind us to the service which they rendered us ; and even these peculiarities, though they disfigure their religion, fitted them for the mission, which was assigned them ; and which, great in its principles, aims, and issues, found in them the most unflinching of missionaries. On this ground, the characteristic incidents of English Quakerism furnish to our history a chapter of interest as well as of adventure.

1. The reign of Charles I. was disastrous to the Church of England. It began in extravagant hopes ; it closed in disaster. Yet it is not to be forgotten, that, in the confusion of these days, the Church of England never fell into such errors as the sects that denounced her ; never rose, as they did, into fanaticism, in order to plunge with them into the depths of delusion.

If we cast our eye over the annals of our Church during the season of its successive trials, from its baneful indulgence by James I. and Charles I., to its final struggle

with James II., we shall find it, during all these epochs, redeemed by eminent virtues, and by learning. Its cathedrals, colleges, and rectories nurtured talents, which excelled those of any other profession; and the vicarage, deanery, or episcopal palace, sheltered virtues in which any age might rejoice. We dislike the temper of Whitgift, and of Bancroft, and the priestcraft of Laud,—we suspect Bishop Montague's Protestantism, and the principles of Cosin,—but we cannot forget, that Bishop Hall preached, with a life more eloquent than his sermons, and Herbert gave us the model of a pastor, and Sanderson, and Fuller, and Jeremy Taylor, and Donne; and Sibbes delivered, in the pulpits of the metropolis and of the country, discourses which still survive for the edification of the good. Whilst Dissent could boast of the genius of Bunyan, and the virtues of Baxter, Owen and Howe; the church of England was adorned by the imagination of Taylor, the wisdom of Usher, the eloquence of South and Sherlock, the meek lives of Beveridge and Ken. She could point to the labours of Pearson, Whitby, Prideaux, and Aldridge; the learning of Patrick, Stillingfleet, and Cudworth; and she was then preparing for her highest posts Barrow, Tennyson, and Tillotson. Many laymen, eminent for virtue, are found in the ranks of Dissent, but we cannot forget that John Evelyn drew from the Church of England the motives for his actions; and Lady Godol-

phin the strength, which was her stay ; and Lord Russell a rule of life, and, at death, his best consolations. In that Church, too, the guileless Isaak Walton held on, in evil times, his quiet way ; and of her, and her children, he has left, to the lover of nature and of worth, his gentle memorials.

2. There is a question, which has always seemed to me of much interest—an interest heightened by the controversies of our times—whether the great Puritan schism, which commenced as early as the reign of Edward VI., could have been prevented by wiser handling ; whether it was possible to have preserved to the Church of England the virtues and learning, which the Puritans at length arrayed against her. We must remember that the Puritans of the reign of Edward VI., and of great part of that of Elizabeth, held opinions widely different from the Puritans under James I. and Charles I. The latter occupied a ground to which events and a long conflict had driven them. They became the declared enemies of the Church, whose Liturgy they proclaimed to be Popish, and her prelacy unscriptural. No concessions could have reconciled such a party—no common Articles could have embraced them. But it was late before this ground was taken by any considerable section. The early Puritans had no sympathy with such opinions. They were not only friends of Episcopacy ; many of them were Bishops. They were not only fond of the Liturgy ; many of

them wrote, some in America suffered, in its defence. They not only had no scruples about the orders and endowments of the Church, they held its dignities, benefices, and lectureships. Cartwright,* the great opponent of Archbishop Whitgift, was for years a fellow of St. John's. Travers, the opponent of Hooker, was, first, Preacher in the Temple; then, Provost of Trinity College, Dublin. Hundreds of the Puritans, like Smith, the Chrysostom of his day, were eloquent preachers in the Church, or laborious pastors. Others, like Cartwright,† defended the Church against the sectaries, and were appealed to by the Clergy, and the Universities, to vindicate her from the attacks of the Romanists. And this happened in the end of the reign of Elizabeth, after half a century of bitter persecution. In the earlier part of the struggle, Puritan scruples arose among the dignitaries of the Church. The first to hold them was Hooper, bishop of Gloucester; they were shared by Coverdale, bishop of Exeter; and by Sampson, who was offered the bishopric of Norwich. In the Convocation of 1562, a majority of the members respected, if they did not embrace, the Puritan opinions. On this side were found Deans and Arch-

* He was also Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity, and a frequent preacher in St. Mary's.

† The request, made by the ministers of State, by the clergy of London and Suffolk, and by the University of Cambridge, to Cartwright, to undertake the exposure of the Rhemish translation of the Papists, is curious.—Marsden's Puritans, p. 171.

deacons, the Masters of Trinity, St. John's, and Pembroke Hall, Cambridge; a great majority of the Fellows and Students of Cambridge, Archbishops Heath and Sandys, Pilkington and Grindal. Cranmer and Latimer, on the eve of martyrdom, had ceased to hold strongly the points which had separated them from Hooper. Bishop Hough and the learned Jewell were eager to defer to the Puritan scruples. To us it may have seemed strange, that aversion should have been felt, by devout and learned men, to such points as the keeping of holy days, the use of the cross in Baptism, kneeling at the Sacrament, or the colour of the vestments. Still more strange that an University should have been convulsed, when a royal order came to the gownsmen to use caps and surplices in chapel. But our own days have now taught us that matters, which are trivial and in themselves indifferent, may be the signs of a resolute purpose, or the symbols of a real defection; and, as such, they may be welcomed by one party, and detested by the other. When to this we add that a large body of the English clergy, at the period of the Reformation, conformed without changing their opinions—were Protestants under Edward VI., Papists under Mary, and Protestants again under Elizabeth—we have no reason to wonder that earnest men should have regarded every outward symptom of conformity to Rome with anxiety, and should have en-

deavoured to place the widest interval between her services and those of the Church they loved.

Still, however sensitive men were on these questions, and tenacious of scruples once adopted, it is pretty evident that time and gentleness would have abated the evil, and at length won over the dissentients. For the hot fight on the surplice and the cross, after it had lasted for half a century, languished ; and when men saw that ministers could be earnest Protestants, while they signed the infant with the cross, and read the prayers in a surplice ; and might receive the communion on their knees, without adoring the elements, they grew weary of a conflict which had lost its interest ; and, while it was maintained by the captious, it was abandoned by the sincere.

3. It must be noticed also, that the great body of the early Puritans were not captious. There was an unreasonable party among them ; whose temper and views were represented in the petition to the House of Commons, and in the bill introduced in 1582. But these were the minority, even after pains had been taken by the authorities to kindle their passions and swell their ranks. As yet they stood proof against this. The scruples, which had troubled them in 1547, adhered to them in 1585. And their desire of change was confined to the same points, in 1595 and 1602, as when they addressed and nearly carried, in their favour, the Convocation of Elizabeth in 1562.


Some, indeed, of their demands, in which the laity cordially joined with them, were reasonable, and in our day have been conceded to the great advantage of the Church; such as that residence should be enforced, pluralities stopped, the immorality of the clergy corrected, and the right of holding clerical meetings for the study of God's word admitted. But the tempers which dwelt with the Puritans were not wise. Walsingham and Cecil, indeed, as intelligent statesmen, would have made concessions to their scruples. Archbishop Grindal treated them with the gentleness of a Christian charity. But the governing temper was that of Elizabeth—jealous of authority, inflexible of will, and more attached to forms than feelings. Her prejudices were deepened by the conscientious though narrow mind of Parker, and the intolerance of Whitgift. There was also, to aggravate the evil, a fatal opinion. It was held on all sides, that the business of the State was to exact from citizens strict conformity with the religious ordinances which the State established; to see that no one absented himself from them; and to treat a slight to them, as a breach of the law. The observances of public worship had the same protection as the requirements of criminal statutes; and severe penalties—fine, confiscation of goods, imprisonment, even death, were enforced on the wrongdoer. The persecution, which arose out of this opinion, lasted during the life of Elizabeth. It was renewed in

1603, under the authority of the Convocation. It was made more systematic and severe, by the influence of Laud, throughout the reign of Charles I. The severities of the Court of High Commission and of the Star Chamber ; the sufferings of Smith, Penry, and Udall, and in later times of Hildersham, Bastwick, Prynne, and Leighton, are blots not to be washed out of our history. But it is not just to represent these as peculiar stains on the Church of England. They were rather signs of the opinion of the times. In England the Church was the oppressor, and the Presbyterian or the Puritan the sufferer. But this was because the Church of England was established by the State. In other countries, where Presbytery was established, the same rule was adopted. In Geneva, Calvin was as intolerant as Laud. It is not the case of Servetus which proves this, but the systematic use of the power of the magistrate, to punish all who differed from the Church established by law. In like manner, Presbytery in Scotland held that it was criminal to tolerate the Romanists ; and banished the preachers of Quakerism. When, under the Commonwealth, Presbytery was in the ascendant, her intolerance was more bitter than that of Whitgift. Even the Puritans, while they suffered, held the principles which caused their sufferings. They thought it hard (as the well-known Petition of the Magistrates of Suffolk declares,) that they should be punished as malefactors for differences

with the Established Church. But they were prepared to put down all whom they thought in error ; and they approved of the law which punished the Papist, the Family of Love, the Anabaptist, and the Brownist. Under the Commonwealth, though most of the sects were compelled to tolerate each other, they tolerated neither the Church, nor the Papist, nor the Quaker. But the most remarkable instance of intolerance is that of the Puritans, who fled from the persecution of Laud ; and passed from Leyden to the shores of New England. In that land of freedom, exiles for conscience' sake, it might have been thought that they would respect conscience, and grant toleration. On the contrary, the soil of Massachusetts was stained with the same intolerance as England. Not a year elapsed, after the arrival of the pilgrim-fathers, before they banished two members of their Council, for no other fault than that they liked and would use the Liturgy. Two more years passed, and another good man was exiled, with great hardships, under a law, which required all to attend public worship ; and the Puritans of Massachusetts, with arbitrary severity, fined, maimed, banished, and put to death the Quakers. It was in this spirit, early in Elizabeth's reign, that measures of coercion were applied in England to the Puritan dissenters. Scruples were no longer tolerated ; differences were hunted out ; departure from conformity was punished ; and earnest pastors, because they

scrupled to use the hood, or to sign with the cross, were sentenced to fine, imprisonment, and exile. Urged on by a harsh temper, and a conscientious bigotry, Parker and Whitgift inflicted cruel wrongs. Can we marvel, if the embers of such a fire carried heat, wherever they were strewed? Many Puritans, to their honour, adhered to their old ground of moderate scruples; but we cannot wonder that such a persecution, carried on for twenty years, should have ended in widening the breach, and in spreading over a large circle vindictive enmities. Thus at length arose that party who, under the name of Puritans, but with very different views, demanded (as in their Petition of 1587) that Episcopacy should be abolished, and the Liturgy recast—Presbyterian synods set up, and a new Service employed. So true is it, that in religious matters, no less than in civil, the temper which rejects reform, and is deaf to remonstrance, prepares for the system, which it supports, the recoil of a passionate attack.

4. But the history of these times suggests a second warning. The controversies, which divided the Church of England, during its first half century, turned on external matters—ceremonies, symbols and observances. In doctrine all were united: Hooper with Ridley, Coverdale with Jewell, Cartwright with Whitgift. Nay the founders of foreign Churches (with a partial exception in the case of the Lutherans) agreed with our Reformers in the verities of the Christian faith. Martyr



and Bucer, Beza, Bullinger, and Calvin held intimate communication with the Reformers of our Church. In matters of order, each Church held its own ground ; in worship, each chose its own forms ; but in questions of faith, all thought alike. Foreigners might doubt the policy of our using the sign of the cross at the font ; but they took the same view with us of the rite of Baptism. They might question the prudence of kneeling at the Lord's Supper ; but on the import of that great Sacrament, all thought alike. They might scruple to use a written Liturgy, or to have it read by a minister in a surplice. But that public prayer should be scriptural and intelligible, all agreed. In truth, the doctrines of the Church of England, as those of the Reformed Churches, were, down to the end of the 16th century, those of moderate Calvinism ; or rather, they embodied the views of Bullinger, whose authority prevailed in England, and whose Decades were enjoined, as standards of divinity, upon the London clergy, by Bishop Aylmer in 1583, and on all the clergy of the Church by the Convocation of 1586. Indeed the warmest Puritans, though they differed from our ceremonies, concurred in our Articles ; even when they forsook the communion of the Church, they insisted on subscription to her Articles as tests of orthodoxy. The first dispute on doctrine arose in the same quarter which introduced intolerance. The pedantry of Whitgift led him to try to shape men's theology like their

dress ; and his ultra-Calvinistic interpretation of the Articles first kindled the flame of doctrinal differences. Our Church, so far from deriving Calvinism from her Puritan members, had to defend herself against the hyper-Calvinism of her High Church section.*

* See Marsden's History of the Early Puritans :—an admirable addition to candid history.

These facts should correct the notions of those who now claim to be the only sound interpreters of the Church of England doctrine on the subject of the Sacraments. Their views, even if they were accurate, are altogether new. They are views which the Church of England for more than half a century never held, or even heard of. These theologians may be wiser than our founders, and more learned than our Reformers : but it is impossible to represent their opinions as those of the Church of England. The attempt to expel from her the clergy who will not adopt these opinions, is preposterous ; for thus we should have cast out every prelate and priest who drew up our Liturgy, deposed every bishop in the reigns of Edward and Elizabeth, and every primate from Cranmer to Whitgift.

And when we hear the Orders of Foreign Churches denounced as "unchristian," and our prelates condemned because they avow respect for them, I must be permitted to remark, that it was with the founders of Foreign Churches that our Reformers took counsel ; from them they drew suggestion and advice. They placed some of these foreigners, as Martyr and Beza, in the chairs of our Universities : they offered to others, as to Knox, missions in our Churches ; they placed some who held foreign orders,¹ as Whittingham, in our Deaneries ; they admitted others, as Travers, to minister in the Church of England, while he communicated with the Presbyterians ; and the act of Parliament (Eliz. 13, c. 12,) allowed all, who chose to conform and subscribe our articles, to hold benefices. These facts may be startling : but they deserve to be known.

But, on the other hand, I must remind those who see nothing in the

¹ See Marsden's Puritans, p. 225.

5. That great passage of the history of the Church of England, which extends from 1600 to 1640, when the civil wars began, was marked by other features of importance. Up to this epoch, there had grown up three religious parties in England: the Sectaries, opposed to the Church; the Puritans, members of the Church, but having scruples on some of her observances; and the High Church party, who insisted upon entire conformity. But there appeared towards the latter end of Whitgift's primacy, in the close of Elizabeth's reign, a new theology, which took its rise in the writings of Bancroft. Discouraged, in its commencement, by Whitgift, it made its way till, with the elevation of Bancroft to the See of Canterbury, and the patronage of Laud, it became the established tenet of a large party. The doctrines of this school were, a belief in Apostolical Succession, the opinion that none could minister without Episcopal Orders: and so pro-

Church of England but a bundle of anomalies, and who think it is time to tear her Liturgy to shreds, and recast her polity, that this was not the view of those wise men who, presiding over Foreign Churches, treated the Church of England, notwithstanding her peculiarities, with affectionate regard. Rather than disturb her, they sought to silence scruples, which in some degree they shared. When the attempt was made to assail her, they were foremost in her defence; and, when her right to the title of Catholicity was denied, her most earnest champions, Cartwright especially, were found among the Puritans. At the close of Elizabeth's reign, one large section of the Puritan party continued their attachment to our Liturgy, approved of our polity, and without any scruple, shared in the Church's endowments.

found a deference for Church authority as to place her precepts in equal rank with the commands of God. After these views had been fixed, there appeared in England the marks of them in a great outward change. The decoration of churches was affected. Communion-tables were altered in name, and appearance. Special attention was given to the position of the font ; to the adorning of the chancel ; and to the painting of the windows. New attitudes, as well as new claims, were assumed by the priest. In favour of some of these alterations, something might be said ; for the fabric of the Church and its ritual had been often scandalously neglected.

But uneasiness spread with these changes. It was remarked, that not merely was outward decorum enforced, but usages till then unknown. Crosses and candlesticks, pictures and images appeared in the chancel. In the gorgeousness of the altar, in the gestures of the clergymen, a uniform plan could be traced. These were not casual, but symbolic—symbolic of doctrines which gave to the altar a new character ; and revived the opinions, condemned by our Reformers, of a sacrifice and a priest. Such ideas spread among the clergy, but alarmed the people.

Archbishop Laud is often accused of treachery to the Church of England, and of a wish to unite her with Rome. This is incorrect. He had a deep, though not a wise, regard for his own Church. But he sought,

(that which has been sought in our day,) to borrow from the corrupt practices of Rome, enough to enhance the influence and increase the ascendancy of the clergy. This effort, which he pursued with the inflexibility of his temper, and the eagerness of one fond of power, drew upon the Church of England very natural suspicion. The piety of the clergy sunk, as their pretensions rose. They exacted increased respect, while they were forfeiting it: scrupulous about the place of a font, of careless lives; earnest for painted windows, negligent of charity. Indeed, every clergyman, who was remarkable for a pure life and deep devotion, was set down as a Puritan. Bishops Hall and Davenant were so denounced. By Royal order, the Sunday was profaned; and every man who refused to join in their revelry was railed at as a fanatic. Some took up these new views sincerely; many from ambition; for through them was the high road to preferment. Under general distrust the Church of England fell, and gave place to a crowd of sects, which covered the land with the slime of their opinions and practices. Speculation, which scoffed at reverence, daring enquiry, debate, and noisy controversy, broke into the pulpit, and profaned the church. But, though the change was great, this opinion held its ground, which the Commonwealth inherited from the Monarchy, and bequeathed to the Restoration, in which the Church and the Sectary were agreed—that conscience was to be governed by statute,

and religion enforced by law. This, the doctrine of Rome, was adopted by the Churches of the Reformation, by all of them without question.

It was no easy matter to gainsay these views. And yet they must be uprooted, if conscience was to be free. The man, who would attempt this, had a hard task, and needed rare qualities: a daring spirit, yet matchless patience; the courage which could brave violence, yet the gentleness which could disarm hostility, and win prejudice by mild persuasion. The mission was a new one. From a strange quarter, and through strange training, the missionary was found.

CHAPTER II.]

THE FOUNDER OF QUAKERISM.

THE state of religion in the reign of Charles I. had become bad enough before the civil wars. Theologians had their hands full of dogmas, and controversy ate up piety. Endless disputes on the Divine decrees absorbed the learned. The clergy thrust forward extravagant pretensions. A large body of these, from the Reformation, had been grossly ignorant, and their performance of the Service was as coarse as that of the worst of the Romish priests. In many cases they did not preach, and it was well for their flocks that they did not: but, however scandalous the clergyman, the law prescribed attendance at church. If any one absented himself, he might be fined and imprisoned. If any one objected to an ordinance of the Church, he was open to a prosecution. Canons had passed in 1604 (141 in number,) which thundered excommunications.* The


*The Canons of 1604 begin with eleven and end with three excommunications,—while between these fires there are scattered some ten

canons, indeed, had no authority over the laity ; but the statutes supplied the defects of the canons. If any one held a religious meeting, he might be arrested, the oath of Supremacy might be tendered him, and if he refused it he was laid by the heels like a felon.

Along with this rigour in behalf of the Church, religious principle and morality declined. Men passed from controversies on the five points of Calvin and Arminius, to revelry. The English Sabbath was rapidly descending to the level of a Romish holiday ; an hour or two of formal devotion was followed by an afternoon of debauchery ; and, if the fear of the law hardly filled the church, the licence of the age thronged the public-houses. It was not wonderful that earnest minds, scandalized by the spectacle, should turn with distaste from ordinances associated with gross abuses, and should learn to hate the discipline which sheltered so loose a practice.

It was at this time, just as Charles the First began to reign, that in the village of Fenny Drayton, in Leicestershire, there was growing up under the roof of an honest weaver, who appears to have been a man of integrity and piety, a boy remarked from his childhood for a singularly sweet disposition and a staid deport-

volles : directed against such offences, as omitting to catechize the children,—in the case of the laity, leaving their parish church,—devising plans of church-reform. Against schismatics and recusants there was a periodical volley of excommunications every six months.



ment. For the feastings and merry-makings of his neighbours he had little taste, and in the sports of his village he took no part. He was placed for a time apprentice with a shoemaker, who united the multifarious callings of a dealer in sheep and shoes ; and this lad alternately tended the sheep and plied the awl. But, becoming more singular as he advanced in years, and possessing some little means which supplied his scanty wants, he abandoned himself, before he reached the age of twenty, to religious impressions : himself wrapped in thought, troubled by many doubts, he visited the surrounding clergy to seek instruction and comfort. As he did not find this from persons in his neighbourhood, he extended his enquiries to the clergy of Northamptonshire, Herts, Warwickshire, and Worcestershire, propounded to any, who were of note, his religious difficulties, and sought from them some repose for his burdened heart. Earnest study of the Bible, musings on the dealings of God, divided his solitary hours with fasting and prayer. He wandered about for days in remote solitudes : he often sat with his Bible in hollow trees and lonesome places until night came on, and then, in the night, he walked about mournfully. The preachers, to whose sermons he listened, gave him no comfort ; the clergy, whom he visited, met his doubts with derision : alone he struggled for four years, uneducated, a lad of three-and-twenty, with the despondency and doubts of a perplexed

but sincere mind. At last the Bible, which he had so painfully studied,* opened to him its treasures; and the prayers which he had offered brought their answer of peace; what he had sought in vain in the ministry of the Church, he appeared to find in his own heart—in solitude: and the peace which he had longed for, which he prized above all attainments, came to him at length, not through the lessons of others, or the words of human counsel, but in solitary abstraction, through the influence of that Great Spirit who can touch the inward mind! With such a personal history, it is not wonderful—on the contrary, it is natural—that the uneducated lad should regard the course, by which he was led, as that which the Spirit of God designed to use in these later days, and that his case marked the advent of a new development of truth fitted to these distracted times. He was little likely to consider that his

* “And when all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me; nor could tell what to do, then I heard a voice which said, ‘There is one, even Christ Jesus, which can speak to thy condition.’—When I heard it, my heart did leap for joy. Then the Lord let me see why there was none upon the earth that could speak to my condition, that I might give him all the glory; for all are concluded under sin and shut up in unbelief, as I had been, that Jesus Christ might have the pre-eminence, who enlightens and gives grace, faith, and power. Thus when God doth work, who shall let it? This I knew experimentally—my dreams of the Lord grew stronger, and zeal in the pure knowledge of God and of Christ alone, without the help of any man, book or writing. Then the Lord gently led me along, and let me see his love which was endless and eternal, surpassing all the knowledge that men have in the natural state, or can get by history or books.”

was only one of the many paths through which God leads the human mind ; that the satisfaction, which he found in solitude, others find in ordinances—in the ministry which he had proved to be ineffectual, and in the teaching which had been powerless to him. Nor was it unnatural that, when he saw the character of many of the clergy of his times, he should have imagined that the only end of a stated ministry was to enable sordid men to ply a gainful calling ; and that the purpose of ecclesiastical ordinances was to harass troubled consciences with formalities, vexatious to the worshipper, though profitable to the priest.

There sprang up in him, moreover, from the same peculiar training, other views, the growth of his circumstances. His habits of solitary musing, the recollection that it was within his own thoughts he had at last found peace, led him to turn within for the promptings of Divine wisdom, and to think that in his heart he was to find all that he sought ;—the inspirations of the Great Teacher, and the counsels of truth. He was thus led to look, for his progress in religion, not so much to acts of duty or to a study of the Bible, as to the turning inwards of the mental eye, on which, if intently fixed, the light of heavenly wisdom would arise. Hence his contempt for human teaching, or the results of human learning. And not unnaturally, himself unlettered, yet, by knowledge of Scripture and observation of men, having acquired the

power of addressing them with eloquence, he held that no lessons were of value but those which came from above, and he poured contempt on schools and colleges, as nurseries of human pride. He denounced Churches as hateful steeple-houses, and ministers as plunderers and robbers.

The same causes led him to other views. He held, that ordinances were useless, and sacraments superfluous; that the only way to advance in piety was to wait the advent of the Great Spirit, to commune with Him in the heart, and, only when sensibly moved by Him, to utter the lessons which He inspired. Thus arose the two great features of the Quaker creed; one, that there should be no public ministry; the other, that the worshippers should worship in silent meditation.


Nor was this all. The Holy Spirit's influence, sensibly felt, would be traced, they thought, by visible signs. The Quaker ceased to look for the evidence of this in his conduct, in the progress of his faith, and the purity of his thoughts. Signs more distinct were to be looked for. Sudden impulses, irresistible convictions, strong impressions, whispered words, audible voices, struck the excited fancy, and caught the listening ear of the eager enthusiast. Thus arose a revelation, beyond that which was written—personal, variable—which might supply, enforce, perhaps supersede, the word of God.

At all times such views have been congenial with

man's love of the marvellous ; when enforced by conviction, and recommended by a pure life, they have been contagious ; in the age, in which Fox opened his mission, they were irresistibly captivating ; for in that age all passions were intense, and the most intense were caused by religion. Then, after a long restraint, the minds of men started into the wildest freedom. From a censorship, which noted every word, and squared opinion to the standard of rule, men passed at once into licentious anarchy. There was not a fancy, however hasty, not a scheme, however crude, not a speculation, however monstrous, which did not burst into light under that strong excitement.

The very names of the sects shew this. There were Anabaptists, Antinomians, Anti-Scripturists, Anti-Trinitarians, Arians, Arminians, Baptists, Brownists, Calvinists, Enthusiasts, Familists, Fifth-monarchy-men, Independents, Libertines, Muggletonians, Perfectists, Ranters, Sceptics, Socinians, *cum multis aliis*. The public mind was in a paroxysm ; and every theory, on society and government, found an advocate. But the great subject, on which men theorized, wrangled and raved, was religion. This spirit had first arisen in the reign of James I., when theological controversy came into fashion. Then, with the Synod of Dort and the struggle between the Calvinists and Remonstrants, Churchmen and Sectaries had rushed into the interminable dispute to which the names of Arminius and

Calvin are attached. Men, whose lives were infamous, sounded the depths of Predestination and Election. The cold-hearted Churchman, and hot-headed Sectary, appeared in the lists with their arms burnished, and fence acquired by training. And, as civil confusion increased, there was no place which was not converted into an arena. Men poured in crowds to the church and the meeting-house, not to humble themselves or to pray, but to witness a fight between two controversialists, to watch the turn of the conflict, and to applaud the victor. No bull-baiting ever delighted the Spaniard, no cock-pit or rat-hunt ever charmed the Englishman, more than those combats which went on, week by week, during the confusion of the civil wars, in parish churches and city churches, where hard-faced men sat with eager eyes watching the disputes, and mingling in the fray. Wherever the Parliament was strong, these prize-fights were to be found; and, long before it became predominant, disputants flocked to the towns held by the parliamentary forces, that they might regale themselves with a feast of controversy. There were to be seen Anabaptists preaching war against Europe; declaring that Holland should be seized, as God had given it to be the dwelling-place of His Saints. There stood up the Fifth-monarchy-men, to maintain that law and magistrates should cease, for that Christ alone should reign. There were to be seen Presbyterians proclaiming the Catechism and the Covenant; and,




Independents, who denounced presbytery as a nuisance ; Familists who reduced Scripture to an allegory ; and, Enthusiasts, riding on the wings of fancy : high Calvinists, who united a strict theology with a loose life ; and Antinomians and Muggletonians, who set aside moral laws. No wonder that whatever views the founder of Quakerism embraced, were sure in the temper of that age to spread among his disciples, and the wilder the more popular. The belief in supernatural powers ; the doctrine of the inner light ; the practice of allowing women to teach in public, led to great abuses. Among the displays of fanaticism which disturbed the Commonwealth, none were more outrageous than those of the Quakers ; and it is not surprising that, while men were scandalized by them, they should have overlooked the worth and charity which in many instances characterized their lives.

We are bound to add, that the Quakers could plead, in justification of their fanaticism, the acts and language of Fox. In the early part of his career, while as a stripling he was guided by the suggestions of his fancy, he often substituted his own morbid impressions for the commands of God. He saw strange visions. He lay for hours in trances ; he believed in his supernatural powers. Now, the story of his life passed before him ; now, revelations of the future. Here, he looked forward into the destinies of England ; there, into the thoughts of another man's heart. He

heard audible voices. He received messages from heaven. He was commanded to wear a strange dress, to walk barefoot into the city, and interrupt a public service, to lift up his voice in the market-place. His dress, which the spirit of singularity led him to adopt, was enjoined by God: and the various fancies which he assumed, were, as he thought, in obedience to a Divine command.

The account of these things is given with a quaintness which, while it convinces us of his sincerity, moves a smile.

“When this man Brown was buried, a great work of the Lord fell upon me to the admiration of many, who thought I had been dead, and many came to see me for about fourteen days. While I was in that condition, I had a sense and discerning given me by the Lord. I saw into that which was without end, things which cannot be uttered, and of the greatness and infiniteness of the love of God, which cannot be expressed by words. I saw the harvest white, and the seed of God lying thick on the ground, as ever did wheat that was sown outwardly, and none to gather it—for this, I mourned with tears. A report went abroad of me, that I was a young man who had a discerning spirit, whereupon many came to me, from far and near. The Lord’s power broke forth, and I had great openings, and prophecies, and spoke unto them of the things of God, which they heard with attention and silence.



“Then I heard of a great meeting to be at Leicester for a dispute, wherein Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, and Common-Prayer men were said to be all concerned. The meeting was in a Steeple-House—to which I was moved by the Lord God to go and be amongst them. I heard their discourse and reasonings—some being in pews, and the Priest in the pulpit; at last one woman asked a question out of Peter, &c. The Priest said to her, I permit not a woman to speak in the Church: whereupon I was rapt up as in a rapture on the Lord’s power, and I stepped up and asked the Priest, ‘Dost thou call this place (the Steeple-House) a Church, or dost thou call this mixed multitude a Church?’

“As I went towards Nottingham, on a fine day in the morning, when I came on the top of a hill in sight of the town, I espied the great Steeple-House, and the Lord said unto me, Thou must go and cry against yonder great idol, and against the worshippers therein. The black earthly spirit of the Priest wounded my life; and when I heard the bell toll, to call people together to the Steeple-House, it struck at my life, for it was like a market-bell to gather the people together, that the Priest might set forth his wares to sale.” We do not wonder that during these proceedings, and Fox’s strong language, the officers, “came, took me away, and put me into a nasty stinking prison, the smell thereof got so into my nose and throat, that it very much annoyed

me. At night they took me before the mayor, aldermen, and sheriffs of the town ; they examined me at large, and I told them how the Lord had moved me to come ; after some discourse between them and me, they sent me back to prison."

Again, he writes, "when I was at Mansfield Woodhouse, I was moved to go to the Steeple-House and declare the truth to the Priest and people, but the people fell upon me in great rage, struck me down, and almost stifled me. I was cruelly beaten and bruised by them with their hands, Bibles, and sticks ; then they haled me out, though I was scarcely able to stand, and put me into the stocks, where I sat some hours, and they brought dog-whips, and horse-whips, threatening to whip me. After some time they had me before the magistrate at a Knight's house, where were many great persons, who seeing how evilly I had been used, after much threatening, set me at liberty. But the rude people stoned me out of this town, for preaching the word of life to them. I was scarce able to go—or well to stand, by reason of the ill-usage I had received ;—yet, with much ado, I got about a mile from the town, and then I met with some people who gave me something to comfort me—because I was inwardly bruised, but the Lord's power soon healed me again. That day some people were convinced of the Lord's truth, and turned to His teaching, at which I rejoiced."

"Coming to Derby, I lay at a Doctor's house whose

wife was convinced ; as I was walking to my chamber, the bell rung, and it struck at my life, the very hearing of it. So I asked the woman of the house, what the bell rang for—she said, There was to be a great lecture there that day, and many officers of the army, Priests and Preachers, were to be there—and a Colonel that was a preacher. Then was I moved of the Lord to go up to them. When they had done, I spake to them what the Lord commanded me, and they were pretty quiet—but there came an officer and took me by the hand, and said, I must go before the magistrates When they had wearied themselves in examining me, they committed me, and one other man, to the House of Correction, in Derby, for six months, as blasphemers.”

“ Moreover, when the Lord sent me into the world, He forbad me to put off my hat to any, high or low, and I was required to Thee and Thou all men and women, without any respect to rich or poor, great or small, and, as I travelled up and down, I was not to bid people good morrow or good evening, neither might I bow or scrape with my leg to any one.”


Yet while we smile at these signs of enthusiasm, we must bear in mind that, at the outset of his mission, the lad, ardent of temper and strong in nerve, entering on a new world of thought, indulged in these whims of fancy : But as time and toil, danger and duty, engaged and restrained him, the wildest fancies disappeared. We hear of fewer visions, we find fewer

impulses. His interruptions of the Church services cease; and, though that peculiar dress and language remained, which have ever since characterized his sect, yet, the first ebullition over, Fox pursued a steadfast course during the remainder of his public mission. Nor must we forget, that whatever were his eccentricities, that mission carried with it some truths of efficacy and power.

No common truths they were which taught his followers to bear, with singular patience, intolerable wrongs—to endure, unmoved, long trials, and to face, as did Isaac Pennington and Mary Dyer and many more, imprisonment, torture, and the scaffold. None can read the history of their virtues without admiration, nor the story of their sufferings, unmoved.

Nor can we fail to believe, when we read the history of their efforts, that Quakerism was designed to revive, in the mind of England, forgotten truths. For, against barren controversies, heartless theology and irreverent speculation, there was presented by it a creed which, whatever were its errors, (and they were not few) was practical, drew men from profession to action—from notions, and formal observances, to the patience and meekness which are signs of earnestness. To revive this spark was the aim of the founder. He came not so much to set up a new sect, as to proclaim fundamental truths, lost in his time in a heap of forms, and stifled in the rubbish of controversy.

On all sides, when in the year 1648, a lad of twenty-four, in the vale of Belvoir, he dedicated himself to his work, a scene of hopeless confusion presented itself in England—the Church overthrown; the clergy scattered; sects of every name engaged in dispute; order gone; laws trampled upon; contests consuming town, country, and hamlet. Men's minds, maddened by controversy, neither found nor sought rest. But through all this din Fox passed unmoved. These struggles had no interest for one, whose mind was absorbed with a grander warfare, and occupied with more tremendous issues. Cavaliers or Roundheads, Royalists or Republicans, he saw in them men of like passions with himself, endowed with the same nature, heirs of the same destiny; and when he found that, buried under controversies, lay hid great truths, he could not rest till, in streets and highways, at the cross or in the market, he had proclaimed them. We can understand how strange, on ears stunned by controversial jargon, fell the personal appeals of the earnest peasant; and when, with the strength of an over-mastering conviction and the eloquence of truth, he struck at every man's conscience, and appealed to every man's heart, and lifting into view the august truths of Christianity, pointed to the dealings of the Great Spirit and the love of the Great Reconciler, many a mind long in bondage arose from its slumber; men and women, amazed and entranced, hung on his lips, drank in every word, and owned that from



the unlettered Quaker they caught the first revelation of the Gospel.

In this respect, the peculiarities of the Quaker dress and language had their use. They made the opposition to the religion or irreligion of the age more palpable. Other sects concealed their peculiarities : Fox published his. They escaped legal penalties by cowardice, stealth, and connivance ; this man, with a strange dress, a mode of speech peculiar, and convictions compelling him to speak, went boldly forth, and was everywhere to be found. There was not a throng or thoroughfare in which he was not present. In cathedral, parish-church, or meeting-house, in market, street, and highway, there was he, that gaunt figure, with strange dress and language. To evade the law was hopeless. He and the law were everywhere face to face. To hide himself from magistrates or soldiers was vain ; wherever they were, he was. The court-house, market, or garrison heard the same story, and witnessed the same usage. Men threatened him, had him flogged, imprisoned, abused him : his imperturbable patience wearied them. Tired of tormenting him, they set him free. Without a murmur he resumed his course ; and, in the same places, in sight of the same authorities, he stood to his teaching. And yet, though he braved them, there was no bravado. He spoke, because he could not help it. He warned men, because he loved them—because he longed to give them the happiness which he enjoyed.

His warnings were earnest, his arguments keen, his eloquence great, but for a time in vain. At first men hooted him, stoned and flogged him. But when they saw him bear their taunts with patience, and take their wrongs without complaint — stripped, flogged, maimed, but never impatient—pilloried, imprisoned, but not depressed—when they saw that his only object was to teach to others the secret of the peace, which he enjoyed, they stopped to wonder, and then learned to admire. Reviled at first, he was at last welcomed ; and crowds, who met the missionary at his entrance into a town with insults, heard him silently, and followed his parting steps with blessings and tears.

The eccentricities of Fox have brought on him, from many writers, the charge of crazy fanaticism. I am not surprised at this. But the judgment appears to me unjust. Sir James Mackintosh, when he speaks of Fox's Journal as "a work of the deepest interest," estimates him with a more philosophical judgment. The truth in this case lies between the ardent admiration of his followers, and the hasty judgment of mankind. There is no doubt that the doctrine of the inner light gave great scope to fanaticism, and led men to mistake the impulses of fancy for the inspirations of truth. But Fox's persuasion of the truth of his mission, and his want of education, combined to give to his writings a character as oddly impressive as his dress. When he spoke, he was eloquent, as men are,

who have strong convictions, and are full of the thoughts of Scripture. His words had the power of oratory ; for they arrested, and persuaded. But his written language is as odd as his dress. And yet that odd language, which defies dictionaries, became, by habit, the dress of his written thoughts, as uniform as the leather jerkin and broad brim with which he clothed himself. And what is no less curious, it has descended to his followers with as fixed a prescription. We find this language* in the works of the courtly Penn, in the writings of Pennington, in the letters of Mrs. Fry, the associate of princes—in the writings of William Allen, the friend of the great masters of the English tongue, Wilberforce and Brougham. This appears to me significant : for the ascendancy of that mind must have been great, which could leave such deep traces upon so many minds and generations. Quakerism has traversed two centuries, has spread over the globe, is now to be found in the seats of the highest civilization, amid the wealth and embellishments of life. Yet it retains in its phraseology the words, and in its dress the fashions, which it took from its peasant founder. No mere fanatic could have exercised so wide an influ-


* If any one would understand the language I refer to, he has only to take up the writings of Pennington, Ellwood, or Fox,—or the Letters of Mrs. Fry, and W. Allen. It is not the 'Thee and Thou' alone, but the use of the words ('Seed,' 'tendering,' and many more) in senses which would puzzle Dr. Johnson, that form the characteristics of the Quaker style.

ence. It is easy for an impostor to found the sect of Mormonites, or for an ambitious chief to originate Mahomedanism. These faiths appeal to the credulity, lust, and ambition of men ; but when a creed is introduced which checks passion, subdues pride, and restrains self-will—we may be sure that there is a principle of truth which gives it power. It cannot be the triumph of folly.

Fox has left us other proofs of his power. His influence over men of various ranks, his ascendancy over magistrates, officers, governors, and statesmen, over the lawyer, the noble, and the imperious Protector, no less than over the artisan and the multitude, are evidences of his integrity and talent ; for such influence is only gained by intellectual power and moral worth. The address of one of the judges to him, as a man “ famous in England,” proves, as clearly as the respect of Cromwell, the regard of Charles II., and the attentions of the Governors of the American States, that this was no common man.


The truth is, that Fox’s character had, like that of many others, two sides ; and the contrast between these is so great, that one can hardly believe them to belong to the same man. On the one side, we have strange thoughts and words, fanciful imaginations—the illusions of an unlettered mind. But such things are not unusual ; Dr. Johnson believed in second sight, in dreams and ghosts ; and his case presents

to us the credulity of a child, with the intellect of a giant. But if we turn to the other side of Fox's character, we find this man of fancies and visions, confronted with controversialists, Jesuits, and lawyers—puzzling them with his subtlety, and with his logic beating down their fences. Now in a court of justice, he confronts the judge, defies the bar, picks flaws in their indictment, quotes against them adverse statutes, and wrings from baffled judges a reluctant acquittal. Then he is in the Protector's Court, to meet a man hard to dupe. There he plants himself, his hat on his head, at Oliver's dressing-table: engages him in long discourse; sets before him his duty; presses on him the policy of toleration; till the iron-hearted soldier, first surprised, then attentive, at length interested, extends his hand to the Quaker, bids him repeat his visit, and tells him, if they could meet oftener, they would be firmer friends. No less remarkable are his courage and skill. As storms thicken, he is always in the front of the battle; wherever the strife is vehement, there he is; now in Lancashire, now in Leicester, in Westmoreland, or Cornwall: meeting magistrates and judges, braving them at Quarter Sessions; vanquishing officers, governors of castles, and judges. Then he sits down calmly to organize, with a forecast equal to that of Wesley, the scheme of Quaker polity, which has lasted to our times. And if we smile at the oddity of his language, at the curious



missives, which he hurls at mayors and magistrates, gaolers and judges ; we find at times a caustic style, worthy of Hudibras or Cobbett, in which he lashes the fripperies of the court, or meets the casuistry of the Jesuit, or ultra-Calvinist ; and as we dwell on those words of wisdom in which he tells us of his faith, and cheers the drooping heart of Cromwell's daughter, we perceive that he is no common man : but one who, with strange training, and singular notions, rose, by the strength of genius and piety, to a wide command over men.

If we would know the lessons which Fox taught his followers, we should turn to the letters in which the gentle Isaak Pennington has poured forth the breathings of his affectionate friendship : letters, which, in spite of their uncouth phraseology, have a great charm, conveying to us the feelings of one who has gone through many trials, and who yearns to pour the balm of his own spirit into the wounded hearts of others. And this he does with an earnestness which awakens confidence, and with a gentleness which makes us love him. Written many of these letters were, in circumstances of personal suffering, in prison, under persecution. But to these trials he rarely alludes, his mind is absorbed in his benevolent mission. And, though that mission was not only one of consolation but also of teaching, we feel that *he* has a right to teach, who sets us in his own self-abandonment so




high an example. The case of Pennington, (not alone among Quaker worthies) illustrates the highest attainment of character, where struggle has ceased, and enjoyment alone remains :—a character sketched to us, in the exquisite lines of our poet Wordsworth :—

“ Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is our unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed,
Yet seek Thy firm support according to their need.”


CHAPTER III.

THE STORY OF THE FRIEND.

WE resume Fox's history. In 1647, at the age of twenty-three, he entered on his work, by protesting against the revels which disturbed the Sunday, and the frauds which disgraced the market. He visited schools, to urge the teachers to bring the children up in the fear of God, and private families to admonish them to train religiously their children and servants. He denounced the Clergy and the Church, proclaiming what he calls their "steeple-houses" as places of deceit, which brought men together that the covetous hireling might set forth his wares. In the third year of his mission, in 1649, his sufferings began; and he offered himself to these with the unshrinking courage of an American Indian. At Nottingham he was imprisoned. Scarcely out of prison, he returned to work. At Mansfield he was beaten, put into the stocks, and stoned out of the town. Next year, he was arrested by the Presbyterian mayor of Derby, and thrown into gaol amongst



felons. There, he occupied himself in reclaiming the Presbyterian gaoler, saving from death an unfortunate convict, addressing letters to the mayor on his injustice, to the magistrates on their negligence, and to the judges on the condition of the gaol. Such was, even then, his influence, that the parliamentary commissioners gave a proof of it, by offering him a captaincy over a new levy, who said they would only serve under George Fox. Again thrown into prison, he was kept there for six months, and released, only because the magistrates became uneasy at their own proceedings. Set free in 1651, he traversed Staffordshire and Yorkshire; visited Whitby, Beverley, Malton, York, Doncaster, Gainsborough, Wakefield, and Hull. In York he was driven out of the minster; in another town, he was invited into the church; here, he preached in the church-yard; there, he was driven out of it, stoned, and dragged half dead through the streets. At Warmsworth staves and clods, at Doncaster stones, at Tickhill mud and bruises, welcomed him: unmoved, he is found next year in Cumberland, meeting the same treatment in the church of Ulverstone; dragged to the adjoining moor, and there beat with hedge-stakes till he fainted away; and then, as he rose, felled to the ground by a brutal blow. Next, he visits the Island of Walney, and its rude inhabitants drive him with fishing-poles from their shores: then the authorities step in, not to protect the sufferer,



but to diversify the suffering ; for the magistrates of Cumberland issue a warrant for his arrest. He meanwhile, travels everywhere, preaches and instructs : here the family of a judge become his converts, there a peasant ; here a group of mechanics, there a garrison. Now he traverses Cumberland, preaches at Cockermouth, then in the old cathedral of Carlisle ; in the Castle which overlooks the grim walls, to the garrison ; in the market to a crowd ; on one side a mob eager to assail him, on the other an audience resolved to protect him. Next he is hurried before the magistrates, and shut up in the Carlisle gaol : the Presbyterian ministers and sheriff vow that he should never come out alive ; cudgelled, at their instance, by his gaoler ; annoyed for months by insults ; yet busy in the gaol, reclaiming, comforting, teaching ; imitating the apostolic example by hymns of joy. Then he is released from the house of the Carlisle justices, lest his wrongs should attract the notice of Cromwell's first parliament. No sooner out, again at work, he visits Northumberland and Durham, churches and fairs,—rebukes, encourages ; then we find him in Yorkshire, defying the fury of the mob at Halifax ; at Drayton, arrested by one of Cromwell's officers, at the suggestion of the Independents ; and next he appears in London, with crowds resorting to him at the Mermaid at Charing Cross. Then we have him disputing with Cromwell. Freed from arrest, traversing more than half England,

in 1655 ; stopped near Yarmouth, as a housebreaker ; at Cambridge, roughly handled by the students ; then face to face with Independents, Presbyterians and Baptists, who were now in power, and all against him. Then he appears in London ; in Bristol, Dorchester, and Plymouth ; in Cornwall, to be arrested at St. Ives, despatched under a guard to Launceston gaol ; preaching under arrest at Bodmin and Redruth, brought up before the court, and in court announcing his opinions. Then we see him buried in a filthy dungeon, in the mire of a common sewer ; liberated by the Protector's order, he resumes his preaching in Devon, Somerset, and Wilts ; then he returns to London, to see the Protector, and to demand toleration for the Friends. Next he is in Wales, holding meetings on the Hill-side ; confuting sectaries ; persecuted by magistrates ; in some places welcomed by the authorities. Then in Manchester ; next in Scotland, disputing with the Presbyterians, preaching in Leith and Edinburgh ; summoned before the Edinburgh town-council ; excommunicated, and banished ; but, undaunted, travelling through Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire, to Northumberland, Durham, and Yorkshire ; and closing his labours, in 1658, with the yearly meeting of Friends in Bedfordshire, a controversy with a Jesuit in London, and his last visit to Cromwell at Hampton Court.

The Committee of Safety, the short administration of Monk, the Restoration of Charles, though they

affected public affairs, did not change the condition of the Quakers.

In the reign of Charles II, the law stood thus :— No one could legally attend Dissenting worship, and no minister could supply it—none were allowed to preach or pray with five persons, without a licence; none could teach the Catechism to children. These acts were offences against the law, to which heavy penalties were attached—easily recovered; a single justice of the peace could break open a Conventicle, and commit to prison those who were found in it. If the party repeated the offence thrice, he might be transported. There was every encouragement to prosecute for these penalties and to inflict them. Justices and Clergymen were promoted for their activity. Bishops took an interest in the prosecutions. Constables, soldiers, and officers distinguished themselves by activity. Thus penalties fell upon numbers, and some of these the best men in the country. Henry was fined and silenced; Owen had to live in retirement: Howe could not shew himself in the streets of London; Baxter was harassed; Caryl and Manton could only preach by stealth; men of eminence were silenced, and deprived of their livelihood.

Many had to support themselves by manual labour; several were starved; hundreds were thrown into prison—some died there. Mr. Baxter was imprisoned in Clerkenwell, Manton in the Gate House; some lingered

in Newgate, some died in the Fleet, the learned Pool in exile. Many were called into the Ecclesiastical Court, where heavy costs and fines fell upon them,—and thus the wrongs of the legislature were enhanced by the severities of law.

But while these sufferings fell on the body of non-conformists, a heavier visitation befel the Quakers. Under the Commonwealth they fared badly; but worse after the Restoration. In common with the church, they had received bad treatment from the non-conformists; but, when the church was in the ascendant, their trials were more severe; they suffered worse than Dissenters—for while all the penal laws fell upon them, they were harassed by others, from which non-conformists were exempt. The Act of Conformity; the Act suppressing Conventicles; the Act banishing Preachers, were applied to them. But they suffered specially from the Act, which required Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy. It was the Quaker's principle to refuse an oath; whenever therefore a magistrate was angry, he tendered the oath, and committed the Quaker as a recusant to gaol; and he was odious both to magistrates and judges, as he piqued their vanity by wearing his hat in court, and braving their authority. The Ecclesiastical authorities were also annoyed by his refusal to pay tithes. Thus on all hands the Quakers raised to themselves enemies,—while among the mob their oddities, defencelessness, and sufferings made them

their butt. By the government, their refusal of oaths made them suspected of disloyalty ; for this, Cromwell threw them into prison ; Venner's insurrection involved them ; the foolish republican conspiracy after the Restoration, drew down penalties upon them ; even Owen, when Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, thought he consulted for the good of the University, by flogging two female Quakers ; and the Oxford undergraduates took the hint and ducked them at St. John's. Mayors and magistrates closed their meetings, and thrust them into gaol. Soldiers, constables and informers dogged their heels ; gaolers fleeced and abused them ; the prisoners found a pastime in ill-treating them ; and from them they passed into the ruder hands of the populace. By the mob they were hooted, cudgelled, dragged through the kennel, soused in ditches, pelted with rotten eggs ; squibs and crackers were thrown into their meetings ; drums and kettle-drums were beat under their windows. Soldiers thought themselves humane, if they only ran their swords into them, for they had orders to kill them. Gaolers held that they might work their will on them, for they were out of the King's protection. Any miscreant considered that he might seize and strip them, as they would not take the law against him.

When Cromwell died, the gaols were crammed with Quakers ; at the Restoration seven hundred were released. In Charles IInd's reign, under the combined

action of the Act of Uniformity, Five Mile Act, Acts against Meetings, and to enforce Tithes, Act to prescribe Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, Quakers were imprisoned, their property confiscated, and themselves transported. In 1662, above four thousand Quakers were in gaol. In London alone, four hundred. In 1662, twenty died in gaol; twenty-five in 1664; fifty-two in 1665. By that year nearly four hundred had fallen victims. On the death of Charles II. (when James II. ordered their release) nearly fifteen hundred Quakers were found in gaol.

But their constancy never failed. When one of the Quakers, Parnell, was preaching at St. Nicholas' Church in Colchester, some one struck him with a stick, saying, 'Thou, take that for Christ's sake.' His answer was, 'Friend, I do receive it for Jesus Christ's sake.' Two Quaker women went to Oxford, to preach repentance to the people. They were beaten and thrust into the prison of Bocardo, sentenced to be whipped out of the city, and their sentence was executed. Two Quaker men set off to Rome, to convert the Pope; one of them died in the hands of the Inquisition, the other was, with some difficulty, by the interposition of our government, rescued. So far from these sufferings checking the sect, it throve by them. The Quakers went to every place,—to the camp and the barracks, to foreign countries, to Jerusalem, China, even to Japan. Some went to reclaim the savages, others to convert the

negroes. One young woman found her way to the presence of the Sultan at Adrianople. Another penetrated with her warnings into the gorgeous presence of Louis XIV. in Versailles. Fox himself swept with his visits all ranks of society and all nations—the Protector, the King, the Pope, German princes, the Electors, burgo-masters, and the King of Poland. By his activity, the sect grew. Its meetings in London were so crowded, that already, under the Commonwealth, they had swelled beyond the accommodation of private houses, and then meetings were held in a large room in the Bull and Mouth Tavern. Quakerism numbered, thus early, upwards of sixty ministers, and included in its ranks magistrates and men of station. It had spread from Yorkshire to Edinburgh, from the miners of Cornwall to the shrewd burghers of Aberdeen. In 1688 it began in Bedfordshire its yearly meetings, formally convened, regularly attended, as if they enjoyed the protection of the law. There was no place or authority that the Quakers did not reach or face. Magistrates and officers, who were employed to apprehend them, became their converts. Their gaolers* were turned into their captives. The Inquisition of Malta, from whose gripe few escaped, was compelled to release its Quaker prisoners; but no instance of their patience is more touching, than that which is presented in the

* The case of Thomas Sherman, Gaoler of Derby, who was converted

annals of America, for, (to their shame be it spoken) the fangs of the American Puritans were sharper than those of the Jesuits.

Anne Burden went to the Brownists of Massachusetts, to warn them against persecution. She was whipped with twenty stripes.* This punishment only excited offenders, and the penalties were raised. Banishment and mutilation now became the punishment of Quakerism. Mary Dyer, not deterred, appeared at Boston with two Quaker friends, to warn the Puritans of their guilt in persecuting. They were imprisoned and tried. Their sentence was death. The two male Quakers were executed: Mary Dyer, unmoved and calm, at the gallows as in the court, received her reprieve without emotion. She was banished, but she came back to Boston, under what she believed to be a Divine call. We give the remainder in the words of Mr. Marsden, "Once more she was sentenced to be hanged. The trial was short, and not wanting in simplicity. Governor Endecot again presided. He asked her whether she were the same Mary Dyer who had been previously before the Court. "I am the same Mary Dyer." "Then you own yourself a Quaker." "I own myself to be reproachfully called so." "Then I must repeat the sentence once before pronounced upon you," and

by his prisoner Fox, in 1650, is remarkable, and the narrative breathes the truth and spirit of Apostolic times.


* See Marsden's History of the Early Puritans, p. 314.

he repeated the sentence. "That is no more than thou saidst before." "But now it is to be executed, therefore prepare yourself for nine o'clock to-morrow." Her husband, for though young and beautiful, Mary Dyer was a wife and a mother, interceded for her life. He had been separated from her, while she was in Rhode Island, and was not privy to her return. With the deep pathetic eloquence with which nature alone pleads, he wrote to her iron-hearted judges, and concluded thus, after first acknowledging her inconsiderate madness,—“I only say this: yourselves are, and have been, and may be, husbands of wives: so am I, yea to one most dearly beloved. Oh! do not deprive me of her, but I pray, give her to me once again. Pity me, I beg it in tears.” But his tears flowed in vain. The next day the scaffold was again erected upon Boston Common, a mile away from her prison. She was strongly guarded, and before her and behind drums were continually beaten, for the eloquence of the dying is known to be imperishable. When she had ascended the scaffold, Wilson, the fanatic minister, was again at his post. “O Mary Dyer,” he cried, “repent, repent;” “Nay, man,” she answered calmly, in words in which a Puritan must have felt a keen rebuke, “I am not now to repent.” She was again reproached with her pretended visions. She replied, and her peaceful demeanour seemed almost to explain her meaning, “I have been in Paradise many days.” The

executioner performed his office,—Mary Dyer was no more."

It was in this state of matters, and in the face of this persecution, that Fox carried on his mission. He had warned his sect not to mix in the intrigues which preceded the Restoration, admonishing them that Christ's kingdom was not of this world; but bidding them "mind the Lord, His power and His service; live in peace, and in Christ the way of peace, and therein seek the peace of all men." He now resumed his work. In Norfolk, he was threatened with arrest by the mayor of Norwich; at Dorchester, his meetings were broken in upon by the constables; at Bristol, by drunken soldiers and a lawless mob, set on by the mayor. Fox's only revenge was to request the mayor to let to him the Town Hall, and he would give him twenty pounds yearly for the poor. Then he repaired to Yorkshire, where the meeting was assailed by the soldiery; but the strange influence of Fox's calmness prevailed, and, after many threats, the soldiery were withdrawn. In Cumberland he was arrested, and lodged in Lancaster Gaol. In that grim castle, crowds resorted to him, and to these he preached through his prison bars. From this he was removed, on a writ of *Habeas Corpus*, to London—sent there, such was the confidence felt in his word, without a guard. It was a new thing to see a prisoner walk into the King's Bench, and offer to the Chief Justice his

own accusation. From this curious arrest he was, by Charles's order, set free. A momentary pause in the persecution led to the release of the Quakers ; but they were again, upon a mad plot of the Fifth Monarchy men, involved in suspicion, and the persecution was renewed. Fox, however, had influence enough next year to procure from the king a royal letter, directing the New England authorities to desist from their persecution of the Quakers : and this he followed up by petitions and protests against the injustice with which they were treated at home. We find him, next, interrupted at his meeting in Pall Mall, but changing disorderly officers into quiet hearers. Then he was arrested by the magistrates in Leicestershire ; sent up to Leicester gaol ; halting at various places to preach ; preaching in the prison-yard ; arrested in Kent ; appearing again in 1663 in Westmoreland, from whence he was again lodged in Lancaster gaol, which he found crowded with labouring men, whose only offence was that they were Quakers. In that gaol he lay for two months, till the assizes ; and from that time till the summer assizes, four months afterwards, he was detained in a room open to the weather, so much out of repair as to be dangerous. When placed in court, he met with calmness the indignities which were heaped upon him, exposed the errors of the indictment, and compelled the judge to acknowledge them. But, instead of being set free, he was remanded to prison, where he remained



with every possible hardship, in a wretched cell, during the whole of an inclement winter, till the next spring assizes. He then appeared in court, emaciated and enfeebled by illness ; and from thence, broken in health but undaunted in spirit, he was dragged on horseback to Scarborough Castle. In that place he was treated with the same inhumanity ; placed in a room out of repair, and open to the weather ; debarred from his friends, though all, who wished to dispute with him or to deride him, were admitted. Bread and water were his only fare. Still the firm spirit was found as calm and keen as ever ; those, who came to him to controvert, were generally worsted ; and the Governor of the Castle, who at first regarded him with dislike, became his friend. From this imprisonment, which had lasted for two years and three months, he was released by royal order in the autumn of 1666. He was set free just after the plague of London, when the great fire broke out. But no sooner was Fox set free than he appears, though hardly able to ride, and his stomach refusing food, travelling through Yorkshire, repairing to London, and instituting, for the government of his increasing sect, the Monthly Meetings. In the following year, a proclamation under the Conventicle Act forbade all religious meetings. The Quakers, who never discontinued theirs, suffered severely. In 1669 we find Fox in Ireland, and travelling through many parts of England, where his poor Quakers needed comfort ; for

the Act, limiting meetings to five in number, involved them in the severest penalties. Seeking always the post of danger, Fox repaired, in the year 1670, to London, and attended the principal meeting in Gracechurch Street. There the soldiers and constables arrested him, and brought him before the Lord Mayor, who treated him however, with the respect due to a reputation now established,* and dismissed him without injury.

* In 1662, Fox was taken before Lord Beaumont, who, asking his name, he replied, "My name is George Fox, and I am well known by that name." "Ay," said Lord Beaumont, "You are known all the world over."

One of the Magistrates for Middlesex, Justice Marsh, said to a Roman Catholic with whom Fox was arguing, and worsting him—"Oh! you do not know this man. If he would but come to Church now and then, he would be a brave man."

In 1673, when Fox was tried before the King's Bench, lawyers of note undertook his defence, and the Chief Justice and other Judges treated him with great respect.

Sir Matthew Hale said he had heard many good reports of Fox—and with the rest of the judges ordered him to be set free.

In 1673, the Chairman of the Quarter Sessions on trying Fox, said, "Mr. Fox, you are a famous man," &c. The other magistrates took a warm interest in Fox's favor.

Justice Marsh informed the King, "that he had sent some of the Quakers to prison contrary to his conscience, but he could not do so any more."


CHAPTER IV.

THE CLOSE OF THE MISSION.

MEANWHILE the sect, the seed of which Fox had sown only twenty-three years before, had now, watered by persecution, sprung up and spread over the Continent, was numerous in the West Indies, and was one of the leading religious bodies in America ; and the obscure disciples, whom in his youth Fox had begun to collect, were now, that he had reached the age of four-and-forty, a great host.

In 1671 Fox visited Jamaica and Barbadoes, and early in the next year landed at Maryland ; from whence he travelled through New England, and other parts of the States, for fifteen months, making his way through countries now easily traversed, but then with great hardship, and only on horseback ; exposed to the severity of the winter, often bivouacking in the snow, with no other shelter than a tree ; but preaching everywhere, extending his interest to the Indians, visiting their settlements, and speaking to them through an interpreter.

Here, the rude Quaker found that over this new world his reputation had preceded him. Governors, magistrates, and military men received him everywhere with respect; and, when he sailed from Maryland for Bristol, on his return, he left behind him, instead of a feeble sect, a powerful and growing party. He came back, however, from reputation and respect in the New World, to his old sufferings; and resuming his activity, he was again, in 1673, lodged in Worcester gaol. There, unjustly detained by the magistrates, he was removed to the Court of King's Bench in London; and as he refused to give bail, he was, by the anomalous practice of the times, suffered to go at large, on condition that he went back to the Worcester gaol. In Worcester his reappearance in court gave signs of the triumph of his influence, and the efficacy of his long conflict with intolerance. For it was no longer amongst a hooting mob, and before a taunting Bench, that the simple Quaker appeared. The chairman indeed, a bitter enemy, treated him with harshness; tendered him the oaths of supremacy and allegiance; and, upon his refusing to take them, committed him to gaol. But many of the magistrates were in his favour; men of rank, like the Earl of Salisbury's son, interested themselves in his behalf; the judges, who condemned him, admitted that he was a man of repute, and "peaceful;" and the crowd, who thronged the court, listened to the proceedings with a kindly interest. But though



the times changed, Fox did not. His course was unswerving. He was threatened, for refusing the oaths, with the penalties of premunire : he was kept in gaol under that charge, and reduced by severe illness : but he refused to accept release even from a royal pardon, because he would not admit his guilt. Charles now took a friendly interest in his case, and pressed upon him a pardon ; but it was only, when his trial was transferred to the King's Bench, and the celebrated Sir Matthew Hale quashed the indictment as bad, and ordered him to be set free, that he was released. To his wife, saddened in 1673 by a fresh imprisonment inflicted on him, he writes :—" Dear Heart ; Thou seemed to be a little grieved, when I was speaking of prisons, and when I was taken. Be content with the will of God. I saw I had a suffering to undergo ; but the Lord's peace is over all : blessed be his holy name for ever." Yet, during all these sufferings, he had been busy with his pen, and several works were issued by him from Worcester gaol. These he followed up with others, after his release, during the year-and-half of repose which he spent to recruit his strength. In 1677, he resumed his labours ; travelled through Yorkshire, assisted in London to prepare the remonstrance to Parliament, and then, after a few weeks spent in retirement with William Penn, passed in his company to Holland, where he continued teaching and preaching through its principal towns, interesting himself for his persecuted

brethren in Poland, and corresponding with a German Princess * who had treated the Quakers with kindness. The rest of the year, after his return to England, was occupied in settling some disputes amongst the Friends. The next two years were passed in comparative quiet on his wife's estate in Lancashire ; but in 1680 the renewed troubles, which fell upon the Quakers, drew him from his retreat; and, as the great struggle of their opponents now was to break up the Quaker meetings in London, it was there that Fox fixed himself. There, with the interval of a short trip to Holland, he remained till the death of Charles II. During the hot persecution of 1685, he and William Penn repeatedly attended the meeting in Gracechurch Street ; and though, when Fox was not present, the constables and soldiers dispersed the meetings, it was a tribute to the power of the man that, when he appeared, they were overawed, and remained quiet hearers in the meeting which they had come to disperse. His last years, after the accession

* The answer of Princess Elizabeth ¹ to Fox's letter was this:—

DEAR FRIEND,

I cannot but have a tender love to those that love the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom it is given not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for Him ; therefore your letter and your friend's visit have been both very welcome to me. I shall follow them and your counsel as far as God will afford me light and unction. Remaining still,

Your loving friend,

ELIZABETH.

¹ Sister of Prince Rupert, and cousin of Charles II.

of James II., through the increasing influence of William Penn, were passed in peace. The yearly meeting in the spring of 1685 was largely attended by hundreds of Quakers set free from prison. Fox was there, as earnest in counselling moderation, as he had been in encouraging his followers in distress. Nor were his exhortations without fruits. The heat and enthusiasm of his first disciples had given place to a more sober feeling. Isaac Pennington, after a life of love, had died—and Barclay, one of the most illustrious of the Quakers, who had brought the strong sense of his Scottish blood to illustrate the Quaker practice, was giving, at this time, his dying testimony to his views. To one of his friends, who conducted prayers by his bed-side, he said; "Amen, Amen, for ever. How precious is the love of God among his children, and their love one to another. My love is with you, I leave it among you." His last words were; "Praised be the Lord. Let now thy servant depart in peace. Into thy hands, O Father, I commit my soul, spirit, and body. Thy will, O Lord, be done on earth as it is done in heaven." Now, at length, Fox's mission was fulfilled, and the infirmities of age began to creep upon him. He continued indeed actively employed, and attended the yearly meeting of 1690, but he spent most of his time at the houses of his friends near Kingston and Waltham Abbey. It is with interest that we read the modest testament in which he bequeaths, for the

use of the Quakers, the small property of three acres of land, with house and stable, of which he stood possessed in the parish of Ulverstone, “ with my ebony bedstead, with the painted curtains that Robert Widders sent me, and my great sea-case with the bottles in it. These I do give, to stand in the house as heirlooms, when the house is made use of for a meeting-place, so that a Friend may have a bed to lie on, and a chair to sit in, and a bottle to hold a little water to drink.” And then, after giving directions for the repairs of the house and pavement, “ that so Friends may go dry to the meeting ; ” and bidding them let any poor honest Friend live in part of the house, he adds, — “ It is all the land and house I have in England, and it is given up to the Lord, and so let it be for the Lord’s service, to the end of the world, and for his people to meet in, to keep them from the winter’s cold and wet, and the summer’s heat ; for,” he adds, with a grateful retrospect of a life spent in so much trouble, yet under such gracious guidance, — “ the Eternal God, who hath, by His eternal, powerful arm, preserved me, through all my troubles, trials, temptations, afflictions, persecution, reproaches, and imprisonments, and carried me over them all, has sanctified all these things to me ; and hath been, by His eternal power, my preserver and upholder and keeper, and hath taken care and provided for me, so that I never did want, and have been content and thankful with what the Lord provided for me ; ” and

so, he says to his son-in-law, "my love is to thee and all the rest of Friends, in the holy and peaceable Truth, and God Almighty keep you in it, and in the order of it. Amen."

On the 10th of November, 1690, he wrote a long epistle to the Friends in Ireland, who were then suffering from persecution. And after this characteristic effort, and continuing to that day his journal, kept for above forty years,—a curious record of opinions, deeds, and suffering,—and preaching with much power in the Friends' Meeting on Sunday the 11th, he took to his bed, and lying there for two days, in great peace of mind, departed this life on the 13th, in the 67th year of his age. The calmness which had distinguished him through life characterized his last hours. His only care was for the Friends, the suffering, and the poor. "Mind," he said twice, "your Friends in Ireland and America." Death he seemed to regard without interest; and to those who asked him of himself, he said, "Never heed, the Lord's presence is over all weakness and death; the Lord reigns, blessed be the Lord." His friends W. Penn, and Thomas Ellwood, ("a discerner of other men's spirits," says Penn, "and very much a master of his own,") have described him fairly, "though the side of his mind," says Penn, "which lay next to the world, and especially the expression of it, might be found unfathomable to nice ears; his matter, nevertheless, was very profound, and would

not only bear to be often considered, but the more it was so the more weighty and instructive it appeared." "He was," says Ellwood, "valiant for the truth, bold in asserting it, patient in suffering for it, and not apt to resent personal wrongs, easy to forgive injuries, but zealously earnest, where the honour of God, the interests of the truth, and the peace of the Church were concerned, very tender, compassionate, and pitiful he was to all that were under any sort of affliction, full of brotherly love, full of fatherly care."

In the Friends' burying-ground, near Bunhill-Fields, amid a great concourse of Quakers, William Penn pronouncing the funeral discourse, Fox was interred; a man, undoubtedly, remarkable for rare gifts, and constancy of purpose; so firm as at length to overbear prejudice; and, by an inflexible patience, to set up, in England first, and then in the New World, the unknown practice of religious toleration.

In this respect he is a man to be much noted, and also because he drew from the sinewy fibres of the English character a force which, guided by principle, achieved its ends, notwithstanding the errors by which it was attended, and many eccentricities.

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Second Sketch.

THE QUAKERISM OF ENGLAND.

SECOND SECTION.

WILLIAM PENN.

In this sketch I have consulted Dixon's "LIFE of PENN;" Clarkson's "LIFE OF PENN;" "MEMOIRS OF EMINENT QUAKERS;" "ELLWOOD'S REMAINS;" "LIFE OF MILTON;" Graham's "HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES;" "LIFE OF OWEN;" "LIFE OF HENRY;" "LIFE OF BAXTER;" Macaulay's "HISTORY OF ENGLAND."

Section Second.

LIFE OF WILLIAM PENN.

CHAPTER I.


THE YOUTH AND PROSPECTS OF PENN.

THE founder of the Quakers was **GEORGE FOX**. Their second great leader, to whom, next to their founder, they look up with reverential regard, and who in general history occupies a more prominent position, was **WILLIAM PENN**.

He was born in 1644; his mother, the daughter of a merchant in Rotterdam; his father, a gallant sailor, of an old family which had settled a century before in Wiltshire, where, in the village of Myntie, in the parish church, one of their family monuments is still to be seen. The father, William Penn, inherited nothing


from his ancestors but his sword, a dauntless spirit, and a pliant but adventurous mind. He selected the sea as his profession ; and appears to have taken no interest in the events of his day, except as they bore upon his own fortunes. He first entered the merchant-service ; then the navy, where, before he was twenty, he was made a captain. Perceiving the fortune of the Parliament to be in the ascendant, he joined that side, and was appointed by Lord Warwick, the Admiral of the fleet, to the command of a gun-ship. In the war with France, and in cruises against Prince Rupert, Penn distinguished himself by daring and success. Rear-Admiral at the age of twenty-three, he was at twenty-nine Vice-Admiral of the Straits.

Indifferent to the changes of politics, he sent in his adhesion to the Protector : and when the war broke out with Holland, he was employed by him, under Blake, in that brilliant struggle which established the naval renown and the maritime supremacy of England. From Cromwell, who sought to attach him to his cause, he received lucrative rewards, rapid promotion, and an estate ceded to him in Ireland. But with sagacious foresight, sharpened by interest, he perceived that the popular feeling was not with Cromwell, but was reverting to the monarchy—that Cromwell's power depended on his life, which was not likely to be lasting. Penn therefore opened secret negotiations with Charles II. ; offered to carry over to him the fleet from Spithead ; and, when



the death of Cromwell, and the deposition of his son, threw the field open for a change, he hurried from Ireland to the Low Countries, to swear fealty to Charles, and, knighted by him, returned to induce the fleet to declare in favour of a free Parliament. He was one of those who joined the fleet which brought the restored monarch to England. These services, which were too important even for Charles to forget, opened to Penn the road to favour and power. He was made a Commissioner of the Navy; and when the war with Holland broke out in 1644, the Duke of York, High Admiral, conscious of his own incapacity, appointed Penn to direct the fleet as Great Captain Commander. To his genius and daring was attributed the success of the battle of 1665. Rewards now poured upon him—member of parliament for Weymouth, a commissioner of the navy, with a residence and good salary, Governor of Kinsale, proprietor of the castle and estate of Shaggarry, in Ireland, a peerage in prospect—every thing, which ambition could desire, seemed at his command. He appeared likely, too, to realize his dream of founding a great family, and transmitting wealth and titles to his son. On that son his heart was set; and he seemed to justify his father's affection, and to promise to realize his fondest hopes. He was born in a small lodging near the Tower, and had grown up to be the delight of his parents. Finely formed, of a spirit bold and adventurous, delighting in manly exercises, passionately fond

of shooting and boating ; and the mind, as robust as the body. His school at Chigwell, and his parent's private tuition, had developed his turn for study and rare talents for business. So stood the boy when the year 1659 reached him. To cultivate such talents, and prepare him for such fortunes, no pains or cost seemed to be too great. Young Penn was therefore sent at fifteen to Oxford, and was matriculated as a gentleman commoner of Christ Church. There he plied vigorously his studies ; became conversant with history, and a good linguist both in ancient and modern tongues ; and, while commended by his tutors for his diligence, he was loved by his fellow-students for his daring and joyous spirit. But the boy's life at Oxford was coincident with some of the greatest events of English history—events which affected even the students of Oxford. The death of Cromwell, and the restoration of Charles, had led to changes in the University. Christ-Church saw the learned Owen removed from its deanery to make room for Dr. Reynolds ; and the dress and forms of the Puritan worship gave place to the vestments and ritual of the Anglican Church. A struggle arose between those who had attached themselves to their Puritan tutors, and those who were indifferent to them, or who favoured the revived doctrines. In this struggle the students, as was natural, took their part ; and those who had attached themselves to Dr. Owen and his friends, resented, with passionate hostility, the attempts to make them conform




to the new usages. In this contest young Penn took the lead. The same daring spirit, which made him conspicuous in sports, carried him into the first rank of this gladiatorship ; and he entered on it, with more of serious thought than we should look for in a lad of seventeen years. The taste of the times, the influence of his teachers and the example of others, had led him to theological study. Already he was versed in the writings of the Puritans. Already his mind, impressed at an early period with the value of religious truth, turned to the works of the Puritans with interest. Nor could such tastes fail to be strengthened in a college, which had admired the learning of Dr. Owen, and felt the contagious fervour of his learned piety.

But as Penn's mind was opening to religious thought, the strange flood of licence, which poured in with the Restoration, came to shock and appal him. The advent of an era of debauchery and vice, till then unknown in England, was associated in his mind with the removal of the forms, to which he had been accustomed, and the revival of the services of a church, with which he was not familiar. The disgust, which attached itself to these, tempted him to look for services free from forms, and made him welcome even the obscure disciple of Fox, when he presented his Quaker worship, and Quaker notions, to the eyes of the wondering Oxonians. The punishments, inflicted on Penn and his fellow-students for their religious practices, only made these more

attractive, and imparted the zest of resistance to the interest of novelty. The students retaliated by attacking those, who displayed the hated vestments in the gardens of Christ Church ; and in the quadrangle, under the shadow of Great Tom, Penn led his associates to the onslaught, and tore off the surplices. It was not surprising that the authorities should have punished such an outrage. The son of the courtly Admiral was called up before the Dean, and expelled the University.

This was the first news, which made the busy and successful courtier aware that his son was contracting strange opinions. Horrified and annoyed, he at first would not speak to him : but seeing that this treatment had no effect, and that the lad continued thoughtful with a seriousness unlike his years, and that he kept up a correspondence with Dr. Owen, he resolved, with wiser tact, to try foreign travel ; and, by placing him with companions of his own rank and age, to dissipate these new feelings. He sent him therefore to Paris and Italy : where he entered the courts and gay circles of the Continent ; though his residence at Saumur for some months, to conduct his studies under Amyrault the Protestant minister and professor of Divinity there, proves that his taste for religious enquiry continued. The remedy seemed at first effectual ; and, after two years passed in learning languages and in foreign amusement, Penn returned to England in 1664, a finished gentleman, with the graces of manner to




improve his natural beauty ; while on the open brow and neck of the youth fell ringlets, which had little in common either with the Roundhead or the sectary.

Welcomed at Court, admired by the ladies of that dissipated circle, he went with his father on board the fleet. The Dutch war broke out, and he was employed to carry the first despatches to Whitehall, where he was most graciously received by Charles. Thus there lay before him, as his father judged, a brilliant prospect of courtly favour ; and, with a proper use of his talents, there was no eminence which he might not attain.

But a more loving Father had resolved to blight these schemes ; and the horrors of the Plague, which broke upon the young student in his chambers in Lincoln's Inn, scared away the dazzling images of honour and fame, and led him to revert to the lessons of Dr. Owen, so often urged,—that life was not a pleasant holiday, but the brief and august arena, in which the doctrines of immortality were to be studied, and its joys and glories won.

When Penn's father returned from his successful campaign, he found his son moody and thoughtful, shrinking from the society of his contemporaries, and eschewing the follies of the Court. The Admiral resorted at once to the remedy which had before proved successful ; and the place he selected, to distract the mind of his son, was Dublin, where the vice-regal court was then presided over by the chivalrous Ormond, one



of the best Viceroys Ireland ever possessed ; who combined with the gallantry of a noble cavalier the purity and honour, which had been long banished from Whitehall. In that court young Penn was warmly received : he won all hearts by his spirit, intelligence, and manners ; and, in the mutiny which broke out at Carrickfergus, serving with Lord Ormond's son, he gained the highest credit by his gallantry.

CHAPTER II.


PENN A QUAKER.

IT is curious to remark Penn's earnest wish to enter the army, frustrated by his father's desire that he should devote his talents to civil affairs. Some occupation, in this latter department, was found for him by his father, who directed him to extricate his Irish property from the difficulties in which it was involved. The Lord-Lieutenant also, though regretting that the army should lose so promising a soldier, gave Penn a civil charge, and employed him in the naval commissariat at Kinsale. Successful in his management of his father's affairs, he repaired to London, to follow out there the final settlement of the estates; and in the Spring of 1667, to him a memorable epoch, he returned to Ireland, leaving behind him an united family and a proud and grateful parent. He then resumed his able management of the property which his talents had recovered for his family. But at the Castle of Shangarry the young courtier was crossed, in his brilliant path, by that obscure Quaker

(whose name but for this would have been lost) Thomas Loe, whose preaching had first attracted him and awakened his youthful convictions at Oxford. These convictions at length deepened into full assent, and led to that resolve which fixed the character of his after-life.

Penn now turned his back finally on the world, which opened brilliantly before him, and surrendered his heart and desires to religion : and to religion, under the rude aspect in which Loe presented it—the faith and forms of the Quaker. On September 3, 1667, an obscure Quaker meeting was assembled at Cork, and shared the fate then usual—of being broken in upon by the soldiers, under the orders of the Mayor, and the congregation *en masse* marched off to prison. To the scandal of the vice-regal court, the astonishment of Lord Ormond and the marvel of his courtiers, the heir of Shanggarry Castle, the son of Admiral Penn, was found among the Quakers. He indeed would have been at once released by the Mayor on giving a personal bond ; but as he refused, and stood firmly on his right, he was only released by the order of his friend Lord Ossory.

The Admiral's astonishment and indignation, when these tidings reached him, knew no bounds. That his favourite son, the object of all his hopes, should have become a moping religionist, was bad ; that he should have become a Puritan, and a dissenter, was worse—but that he should drivel down to a Quaker, was more than flesh and blood could bear. Was he, the courtier's



son, to abjure titles, and renounce honours, talk a mixed jargon of cant and slang, and walk with his hat on into the court of Whitehall, to stand covered before his sovereign? He recalled his son from Ireland; he remonstrated, entreated, stormed; and, finding the youth resolute though respectful, he turned him into the street.

Thus cast out, the youthful Quaker was not left to starve. The sect, on whom his accession shed such lustre, received him with open arms. His mother's love supplied his wants, and the fear of hunger or of nakedness was certainly not before his eyes. But there was a sharper trial; that a youth, with the world at his feet, able, sanguine, of high spirit, and manly accomplishments, a favourite in the court of his sovereign, caressed in the vice-regal court of Dublin, with the gallant Ormond attracting him to his side, and his son choosing him for his associate—that in this age of gaiety and gorgeousness, of courtly manners and sparkling wit, which history associates with the names of Rochester, Buckingham and Sedley, with those picturesque dresses which still charm the eye on the canvass of Lely—that a youth, who had entered these circles, and had risen to notice in them, should fling this away, to assume that sombre dress, uncouth language, and demure manners, which marked him as the butt for every jest, and the bye-word for every ballad,—that he should henceforth school himself to bear jibe

and jeer, with a patience which the world would despise,—and suffer calmly ridicule and wrong,—this was hard for young blood to bear. It is evident that no form of trial could press more heavily on the mind of the young cavalier, than this which he was called on to endure. When, at length admitted into his father's house, he had to live under the same roof with one to whom he was tenderly attached, but who for months never addressed to him a word; or when he walked down, hat on head, to Whitehall, to accost the Duke of Buckingham, and urge upon him an appeal to Parliament in favour of toleration, while an idle court circle gathered round to listen,—we can hardly say which was the sharper trial, that which crushed his heart, or that which galled his pride. At all events, if we do not sympathize with the outward form of his piety, we must recognise its honesty, and admire that courage which triumphed over a thousand obstacles, in order to pursue what he believed to be his duty.

It is curious to see Penn's natural daring finding a vent for itself in the only course now open to it. He threw himself, at once, into the vanguard of the Quakers: whenever they were attacked, he appeared as their champion. His sword was sheathed from war, but his pen and voice were active in controversy. If a Presbyterian divine assailed the Quakers, Penn challenged the minister to a controversy, and confronted him in his meeting-house. If a Baptist preacher at-

tacked them, he was at his post; and the Baptist pulpit was filled by the hardy disputant. Did a rebellious disciple break the laws of Quakerism? Penn stepped forth to chastise him. Did the Vice Chancellor of Oxford punish the Quakers? Penn rated the Vice Chancellor in language of caustic power. Did the Church condemn the Quaker tenets? he vindicated them in the teeth of the Church. And as bishops, in those days, did not confine their reply to logic, the disputant was condemned as a heretic, and, at the instance of the Bishop of London, was lodged in the Tower. But the lad of four-and-twenty was not to be silenced. He was placed alone in a dungeon. No one but his father had access to him. He was kept in durance eight months; he was told that he should die in prison unless he recanted. He knew that others were then rotting in gaol,—that some had died there. But he never faltered. In vain Stillingfleet, sent by the King, conjured him to yield; in vain he pointed out to him the prospects which he marred, and the quiet which he might enjoy. Penn had made up his mind; and from that purpose he never wavered. Out of the walls, where so many innocent victims had sunk, he shot forth a pamphlet which, under the title “No Cross no Crown,” shewed the grounds of his constancy, and astonished the Court with an extent of memory and research which riper years and ready libraries award to few. The Court was ashamed, the Church was wearied,

the invincible stripling was released. His father, though he disliked his principles, admired his courage ; and he saw with respect that the confinement, which had subdued his own constancy, was lost on his son. From this moment, the dispute between them was at an end. True, the father often sighed over the defeat of his cherished hopes ; but he availed himself of his son's dutiful attachment and his rare capacity for business, to extricate once more his Irish estates, which were again embarrassed. When he found his health breaking, he breathed a wish for his return, which was instantly acceded to, and he turned to his son's presence as his best consolation. He welcomed him when released a second time from prison, in which a prosecution for conducting Quaker worship had involved him, with affection, and a few days after breathed his last in his arms ; setting, by his dying testimony, the seal to his son's conscientious choice—and bidding him, though himself unable to share his opinions, adhere to his course of rectitude ; a better course, as the dying father said, than that which he himself had followed, and which he declared had brought with it only weariness of soul ; admitting, that better than the pursuit of wealth and rank in an earthly court, is it to serve that mighty Sovereign who accepts the willing homage of the reclaimed life. The favoured courtier made one last request to his earthly masters. He saw the life of trouble which, in those days of persecution, awaited

his son; and he begged the King and the Duke of York to protect him. The latter kept his word. The Admiral left to his son* an ample fortune; on which, had he been so minded, he might have settled in affluent ease.

* Said to be £1500 a-year, then a large fortune. The family seat was at Penn, in Buckinghamshire.

CHAPTER III.

PENN A SUFFERER AND AT HOME.

FROM the moment when his first recal from Ireland presented him to the world as a Quaker, Penn accepting the full weight of his mission, set himself fearlessly to announce the doctrines of Quakerism, to defend them when attacked, and to protect his fellow-religionists. Between 1670, the year of his father's death, and the end of 1673, when Charles was compelled to recal his Declaration of Indulgence, and when Parliament, inflamed and alarmed, passed the Test Act, Penn wrote twenty-seven books of controversy; and held public discussions with the Baptists,* with the celebrated Baxter, and with the Roman Catholics; he preached with such zeal that in twenty-one days he addressed twenty-one different congregations; wrote innumerable letters to sheriffs, lord-lieutenants, and magistrates, in vindication

* The discussion with him must have been a curious scene: held in Penn's house, at Rickmansworth, before two roomsfull of company, and lasting from ten till five.

of his suffering friends; stood two trials, in which he conducted his own defence; endured two long imprisonments in Newgate and the Tower; and yet, neither wearied nor daunted, carried his appeals for toleration of religious opinion, to the public, to Parliament, and to the Throne. Prison only varied his labours; it never suspended them. When free, he itinerated, preached, and controverted. When in Newgate and in the Tower, he assailed the public mind by pamphlets and protests.

Whether it was controversy or correction, the chastisement of a contumacious Quaker, or the answer to an angry disputant, Penn was always ready, and the sword of controversy was always in his hand. Hicks or Kiffin, Perrot or Faldo, Bowles the Wiltshire justice, or Justice Fleming, or Cheney the Warrington logician, or Abrahams the Dutch Socinian, or Rogers the Separatist, found their match in Penn; and his pleading for English liberty in his work 'England's present interest,' shews that he thoroughly understood the rise and character of our freedom.

There was this difference between Penn and his Quaker friends. They, simple men, overcame by enduring; he, in a different sphere, with wider views and larger connexions, stood upon his rights as an Englishman, and maintained them by argument and influence. He appealed, in behalf of them, to the Government, to Parliament, and the country. With this view, he maintained before the Recorder of London

his right to worship freely ; he urged the jurors, who were fined for acquitting him, to carry their case before the Court of Common Pleas ; he interested himself in the political opinions of Algernon Sydney, and in his return to Parliament, eagerly canvassing for him at Guildford and at Bramber ; and he took an active part in the councils of that political party, of which Sydney and Lord Russell were leaders. We find him appealing to the electors, in an address which was widely circulated as a political brochure ; and he was examined on the question of Religious Toleration by a Committee of the House of Commons. It is quite true, and greatly to his praise, that in these movements Penn always kept in view the promotion of the cause to which he had devoted his life.

For to the Quakers it was of infinite moment, both as a fundamental truth and as the only hope for practical toleration, that the idea of persecuting religious opinions should be abandoned, and the duty of tolerating them should be admitted. It was for this that Penn appeared before the Committee of the House of Commons, and appealed to the electors of England. He was indeed unsuccessful, because his views were in advance of his age. It was only in the conflict of passion in the civil wars that Jeremy Taylor had touched the chord of eloquence in behalf of the liberty of conscience,* and, from the stillness of Milton's closet, a

* He published the *Liberty of Propheying* in 1647.


deep voice raised its solitary witness for religious freedom. Nor is it unlikely that Milton caught this inspiration from his Quaker friend. But in that age, such a view was considered as treason to the authority of the State, and infidelity to the Church; and as the Roman Catholics, then great sufferers, were interested, for their own sakes, in toleration, Penn, and those who thought with him, being thus far in unison with the Romish party, were denounced as Jesuits. To this charge the earnest discussions, which both Fox and Penn held with the Romanists, were sufficient answers. But, in spite of Penn's appeal, Parliament held on its way; manifesting its spirit, first by the Conventicle, and then by the Test Act. The Duke of York, to whose intercession Penn appealed, was powerless, as he himself ran great risk of being excluded from the throne, and the persecution which fell on the Quakers was unrelenting,—fines, imprisonment, and ruin were the common penalties. It was indeed a strange doctrine, unheard-of in those days, that Penn laid before the Committee of the House of Commons, that, whether men's opinions were right or wrong, they were to be free to hold and teach these, and for them none should suffer.* Penn saw with sorrow that this hope of his life was blighted, and that, in England, toleration in his time was not likely to be realized. It was under this impression that he turned his thoughts to realize a more

* In his speech to the House of Commons' Committee.

youthful and sanguine dream. But before I refer to this, let me not leave on my readers the impression that Penn, in the midst of his controversial conflicts, had no heart for the sympathies of life. His conduct to his father proved his filial affection; his love to his mother was tender and constant. She did not indeed enter into his religious views, but she loved him with a mother's fondness, which he repaid with undiminished regard: and, even when he had contracted other ties, and was in the course of his most strenuous labours, her death plunged him into such depths of sorrow, that it was long before he was able to resume his work.


But there was another affection, which came early to soothe his cares. In 1672 the young martyr found a recompence for his months in Newgate and the Tower, in his marriage with Guli Springett, then in the dawn of her youthful beauty. She was a Quaker; but music and accomplishments were not denied to the Quaker girl. And, though her childhood had passed under the shadow of that deep sorrow in which her mother bore her, this had softened but not overcast her mild and radiant joy. She was living, when Penn first drew her heart to his, in the quaint and quiet village of Chalfont St Giles, where the downs and woods of Buckinghamshire slope into the valley.

That village, about the time when Penn first saw it, offered to the wayfarer who traversed it a rare aspect of interest and repose. For there the great Milton had



found a refuge from the plague of London, in a quiet cottage: there he wrought on his immortal poem; read it to his charmed and astonished friends; and there, from his Quaker friend Thomas Ellwood, he caught the first idea of his "Paradise Regained." There, he listened, in the cottage-room, woodbine wreathed round the casement, with sightless eye-balls rolling in glorious visions, to the Quaker girl, as she played him the music, which stirred his soul and woke it to heavenly inspirations. There, too, dwelt, in humble affection, the simple Quaker, Ellwood, admiring with distant love the beautiful girl, and watching with dutiful homage his poet friend. There, in their great sorrow, weary, at length had found rest, the girl's mother, and her second husband, Isaac Pennington: hearts deeply stricken, drawn together by grief, and finding, in their sympathy, and at last, in the truths preached by the Quaker teachers, an abiding comfort. And truly Mary Proud (such was her maiden name) needed all this comfort, as they may learn who turn to those affecting memoirs in which she has recorded her life; a story, to be set side by side with that of Mrs. Hutchinson and Lady Russell for touching interest; which opens a tale of sorrow rare even in those times; teaching us how, when yet a girl, she had found in one, whom from her childhood she had known, the husband of her heart—how worthy he was of her affection and of a woman's wedded love: enterprising and bold; in all pursuits of truth and letters at

Cambridge, forward ; in manly gallantry, eminent ; knighted by Charles's hand ; but, when the civil war broke out, joining, from conviction, the Puritan cause, and rallying the men of Kent to the standards of the Parliament ; in many hazardous enterprises, conspicuous ; in the battle of Newbury, and at last, in the capture of Arundel castle, finding success and fame, but with it, though yet a stripling, a grave. For there, while invested with the command, the fever struck him ; and, feeling that the blow was mortal, he sent for his young wife. She, soon to be a mother, flew to his side, through hazards of war and storms of winter, from London to Arundel. At the dead of night she arrived ; and, as she mounted the castle-stair, the dying man caught the sweet voice, and sprang up to clasp her in his arms ; and then, it is told, she knelt by his side for hours, and hung over him, pressed her lips to his burning lips to give him ease, regardless of her own state and of the malignant contagion ; while he, delirious but soothed by her presence, fell into uneasy slumbers ; till at length they tore her from him, that, as they said, he might die quietly ; while she, hearing of death, in the agony of her sorrow, rose against it, and stamped on the ground in speechless horror ; till a gracious God sent bright visions to soothe his wandering spirit, and smiling and radiant he lay, till death gave him release. All this she has told us. And out of that deep sorrow she passed, through the Quaker's teaching, into



the Christian's peace, in which hope and persuasion she reared the child of so much grief. The girl, now a Quaker, gladly received the youthful Penn, who had earned among his sect a high fame. And wedding him, dutifully, she kept her vows, loving him with a woman's true love, attending him in journeys, soothing him in reverses, calming him in conflicts, and never parting from him through weal or woe till death divided them. He, dutiful and true, came back from his wanderings to the home of so much love, and mingled a husband's grateful thanks with the aspirations of the Christian, and the plans of the patriot. Such was the course of Penn's domestic life.

But, that we may appreciate better the tenor of that life, and the depth of those family feelings, which are most seen when sorrow or separation break their even course, we must turn to the letter which, on the prospect of his separation, Penn addressed, before sailing for America, to his wife and children; "My love, he says, which neither sea nor land nor death itself can extinguish or lessen towards you, visits you with eternal embraces, and will abide with you for ever, and may the God of my life watch over you and bless you and do you good in this world and for ever! My dear wife, remember thou wast the love of my youth, and much the joy of my life, the most beloved as well as the most worthy of all my earthly comfort." After advising her to be regular in the division of her time, and to live

within compass, till his debts are paid, he says, "I know thou lovest plain things, and art averse to the pomps of the world, a nobility natural to thee. I need not bid thee be humble, for thou art so, nor meek and patient, for it is much of thy natural disposition; but I pray thee, be oft in retirement with the Lord, and guard against encroaching friendships." In commending to her the care of his children, "to breed them up in the love of virtue, and that holy plain way of it which we have lived in," he bids her "be liberal for their learning, and on that spare no cost. Give them useful and practical knowledge, and mix it with bodily exercise."

To his children he says; after urging them to the fear of God and obedience to their mother, "Be sure to live within compass, let your industry and parsimony go no further than for a sufficiency for life, and to make a provision for your children, and that in moderation. Love not money, nor the world, use them only and they will serve you. I charge you, help the poor and needy, make your conversation with the most eminent for wisdom and piety, and shun all wicked men, as you hope for the blessing of God and the comfort of your Father's living and dying prayers." And those of his sons, who were likely to be concerned in the government of Pennsylvania, he advises "to be lowly, diligent, fearing God, loving the people and hating covetousness. Live the lives yourselves, you would

have the people live, and then you have right and boldness to punish the transgressors." And he ends his letter with a "farewell to my thrice dearly beloved wife and children, yours as God pleaseth, in that which no waters can quench, no time forget nor distance wear away."

We may anticipate here still, further to shew the strong affection of Penn, and present him, as he watched in 1695, for two long years, the sick bed of his eldest boy. Very deep was that affection; very true that father's love, and very touching is the picture which his own hand gives of his sorrow. "My very dear child and eldest son did, from his childhood, manifest a disposition to goodness, and gave me hope of a more than ordinary capacity, and time satisfied me in both respects. For more than half a year before it pleased the Lord to visit him with weakness, he grew more retired, and much disengaged from youthful delights. But when he saw himself doubtful as to his recovery, he turned his mind and meditations more apparently towards the Lord, secretly, as also when his attendants were in the room, praying often with great fervency, and uttering very many thankful expressions and praises. One day he said to us, I am resigned to what God pleases, He knows what is best; I would live, if it pleased Him that I might serve him. But O Lord, not my will, but Thine be done. Being ever almost near him, and doing anything for him he wanted

or desired, he broke out with much sense and love, My dear father, if I live I will make thee amends ; and to another remark he replied upon me, with a serious yet sweet look, All is mercy, dear father, every thing is mercy ! At another time, as I stood by him, he looked up upon me and said, Dear father, sit by me : I love thy company, and I know thou lovest mine, and, if it be the Lord's will that we must part, be not troubled, for that will trouble me. The day but one before he died, he went to take the air in a coach, but said at his return, Really, father, I am exceeding weak, thou canst not think how weak I am ! My dear child, I replied, thou art weak, but God is strong, who is the strength of thy life. Aye, that is it, said he, which upholdeth me. His time drawing on apace, he said to me, My dear father, kiss me, thou art a dear father, I desire to prize it, how can I make thee amends ? He also called his sister, and said to her, Poor child, come and kiss me, between whom seemed a tender and long parting. All were in tears about him ; turning his head to me, he said softly, Dear father, hast thou no hope for me ? I answered, I am afraid to hope, and I dare not despair, but am and have been resigned, though one of the hardest lessons I ever learned. He paused a while, and with a composed frame of mind he said, Come life, come death, I am resigned, Oh ! the love of God overcomes my soul. Feeling himself decline apace, somebody fetched the doctor, but, as

soon as he came in, he said, Let my father speak to the doctor, and I'll go to sleep, which he did, and waked no more, breathing his last on my breast."

The course of Penn's domestic life was as simple as from such a man we should have expected. He watched over his servants with the care of a father. At 12 was their patriarchal time of dinner, supper at 7, and at 10 to bed. Early in the morning, they assembled for worship, again in the evening at six, while at 11 they met to read together some religious work. After supper, the servants rendered an account of their acts through the day, and received instructions for the ensuing day.

CHAPTER IV.

PENN A LEGISLATOR.

BUT Penn was now to accomplish the desire of his youth, the object which, in his maturer years, he had always set before him. Already when a student at Oxford, appalled at the inroad of depravity which set in with the return of monarchy, Penn had soothed his fancy, as he wandered through the avenues of Christ Church, with visions of a happy commonwealth, under a pure government, where freedom and virtue should reign. He had cherished the same dream when, on first meeting with Algernon Sydney on the continent, he had been admitted to a glimpse of those Utopian visions in which that ardent Republican had embodied his impressions—impressions suggested perhaps by the pages of More and Harrington, but afterwards modified and illustrated by the familiarity of Penn with the ancient commonwealths of Greece and Rome. But the commonwealth of Penn required more than that of Sydney; not liberty only, but religion—

the rule of Christianity, as well as the reign of freedom. Was this a dream? Could it be realized? Was it the fancy of the poet? Would mankind receive it? Was the world fitted for it? At least, in the New World alone was it to be found: from Europe liberty was banished, and toleration was as yet unknown. To the New World therefore Penn's thoughts turned; to the vast world beyond the Atlantic, which had received, on one corner of its sea-coast, the exiled Puritans. They, indeed, had carried with them the intolerance from which they had fled; but as they had found in one part a platform for their polity, might not he and his Quaker friends establish another for their nobler freedom? It was a great experiment, but it was a great cause—an aim worthy of a life. Penn would leave others, for a time, to contend at home with prejudices; let him offer their best refutation, by presenting to mankind the model of a free and happy commonwealth, where each should follow his own conscience, and in the depths of his spirit worship God.

In 1677 his floating schemes were brought to a point by his visit to Holland, and by the accounts which there reached him from Quaker emigrants, who had crossed the seas and settled on the gigantic seaboard of the West. The story of their wanderings, their adventures and their progress, fired his fancy: and events, which he did not foresee, occurred to decide his plans.

That vast district, which stretches from the Delaware to the Connecticut, had been granted by Charles II. to his brother the Duke of York, and by him part of it, lying between the Hudson and Delaware, had been handed over to two English noblemen; from one of whom, late governor of the island of Jersey, it received the name of New Jersey. After various negotiations, part of the province was sold for a thousand pounds to a wealthy Quaker; and finally, through Penn's interposition, (whose aid, from his influence and habits of business, was sought to disentangle the difficulties,) it was secured and made an independent province, under the title of West New Jersey. A large body of harassed Quakers, flying with their chattels from the land which had so severely used them, found on the banks of the Delaware a refuge, which prompted them to call the infant city in the wilderness by the name of Salem. Grateful for Penn's assistance, and relying on his judgment, the new colonists applied to him to prescribe the laws and constitution of the infant State; and Penn, shutting himself up at Worminghurst, in Sussex, in the summer of 1676, drew up the constitution which secured for the new colony a representative government, trial by jury, freedom of conscience, and a system of national education. To provide for the first exigencies of the colony, Penn, with the leading settlers, selected the first executive government.

Since the days of the first Puritan emigration, no

event, of greater interest to the feelings of the ardent friends of freedom in England, had occurred. The draft of the new Constitution was published, and, with a brief description of the advantages and capabilities of the colony, was widely circulated. The news flew through England. Wherever the Quakers were found, it revived and gladdened them. Two companies, to promote emigration, were formed in Yorkshire and Middlesex. A body of emigrants, with the commissioners, sailed from the Thames; another body from the Humber. Tents were seen on the Delaware, and the worship of the Quakers found a place on that remote strand. The wandering Indians came to gaze at these peaceful strangers, and, delighted with their gentleness, assured them of their friendship. The language of the Sachem chiefs was graphic. "You are our brethren," they said to the English Quakers, "and we will live, like brethren, with you. We will have a broad path for you and us to walk in. If an Englishman falls asleep in the path, the Indian shall pass him by and say, He is an Englishman: he is asleep: let him alone. The path shall be plain. There shall not be in it a stump to hurt the feet." Thus the colony grew; land was sold; tillage spread; the desert retired, and already on the pathless forest appeared the traces of industry and civilization.

Penn meanwhile sought, in other parts of Europe, colonists for the new State, and a rest for his fellow-

sufferers. With Barclay and Fox (the latter of whom could testify of the New World from his own observation) he went to Holland. At Rotterdam and Amsterdam, at Leyden and Haarlem, he addressed the Dutch Quakers, and unfolded to them these opening prospects. To Herwerden, and Paderborn, and Cassell, and Frankfort, Penn transported his Christian preaching and his patriotic zeal. Through Worms and Mannheim, down the Rhine to Cologne, he carried the message of his Quaker doctrines ; the bigotry of priests and the despotism of princes, were startled, for a moment, out of their security, by the advent and passage of the missionary of peace. He returned to find, in all parts of England, a keen interest in the colony. Hundreds of emigrant settlers sailed ; he was overwhelmed by enquiries, details, and directions, given with regard to the conduct of the colony abroad and the despatch of the emigrants from home. To this was added another interest, with further labour. Circumstances led to the eastern portion of New Jersey being offered for sale ; and Penn, with several of his sect, purchased it, and established there a government on liberal principles ; the effect of which, coupled with his reputation, now widely established, was to draw more emigrants to this colony.

This success, and the disappointments he had met with at home, in all his efforts to improve the prospects of English freedom, induced Penn to devise a greater

scheme. He had a claim on the government for £16,000, lent by his deceased father to the court and naval service, which were always in embarrassment. Charles was ready to borrow, but found it hard to repay. Penn met the royal exigencies, by offering to compound his debt for a grant in America. To the east of New Jersey, and between it and the Roman Catholic province of Maryland, lay a large tract, stretching three hundred miles in length, and half that distance in width, along the Delaware, where that river finds its outlet in the sea, to the backbone of the Alleghanies, and crossing them, along the banks of the Ohio, to the shores of the distant lake Erie, then silent, now busy with life and spangled with towns and hamlets, traversed by railways and crowded by manufactures. This vast tract was then covered with forests and prairies, in which a few scattered Indians trapped the beaver or ensnared wildfowl, or hunted across the plains the elk and deer. There, where now fleets of merchantmen crowd the basins, not a sail was to be seen on the bay; where coal and marble and salt have given staple to factories and returns to capital—where furnaces smoke and factories clatter—the woods of chesnut and oak, the pine and the poplar, the gumwood and the hickory, mingling with the myrtle, the cypress, the mulberry, and the cedar, resounded with the song of countless birds and the cry of roving beasts of prey. On these mountain ranges hung impenetrable

woods, often shrouded in deep fogs ; and settlers, turning to more genial climes, shrank from the gloomy forest ; not the less that a fierce and active race of Indians had fixed their wigwams there, and, encamping in its open glades, poured at times into the bordering prairies, and carried havoc and death in their assaults.

Penn's application for this province in lieu of his debt was met at first by difficulties. The idea that he meant to introduce into the New World his strange notions of freedom and toleration disquieted the Court and the Commons. His support of the New Jersey settlers against the Duke of York had alienated his royal patron ; while the interests of Lord Baltimore, the proprietor of Maryland, were violently opposed to his proposal. These difficulties kept the matter long in suspense ; but the impossibility of finding means to discharge the debt was the strongest argument in his favour, and at last prevailed. The charter was drawn out ; the Lords and the Committee of Trade and Plantations revised it ; the Council was summoned ; at Whitehall sat the gay and careless monarch ; before him, his hat on his head, stood the imperturbable Quaker ; a blithe jest fell from Charles ; and, by a careless stroke of the royal pen, the State of Pennsylvania,* with its rivers and mountains, forests, and destinies, passed into the hands of the Quaker, and

* Penn wished it to be called New Wales, or Sylvania—but Charles insisted on adding the name of Penn to it.


was confirmed afterwards by the cession of rights on the part of the Duke of York.

The spirit, in which Penn received the gift, was fitted to its grandeur ; no boasting, or self-gratulation, but the confidence of a humble and grateful heart :— he appreciated the greatness of the gift, and recognised the Giver ; “ God,” he said, “ hath given it to me in the face of the world ; He will bless and make it the seed of a nation.”

In the constitution of the colony he was assisted by Algernon Sydney ; and at Worminghurst and Penshurst the two friends drew up its several articles. That it established perfect freedom of conscience, it is needless to remark. It established also a no less absolute freedom of trade ; Penn sacrificing to this desire the sums, which he might have received from the sale of monopolies. The constitution, as we might assume from its bearing the sanction of Algernon Sydney, was democratic : a council of seventy-two, elected for three years, formed the senate, which Penn intended to be the deliberative body ; an assembly, elected yearly by ballot and universal suffrage, and paid, confirmed or rejected the acts of the council. Trial by jury gave scope to public opinion, but the provision, that the judges were chosen only for two years, and could thus be removed by the Assembly, impaired the administration of justice.—Religion was left to voluntary efforts.—Education was carefully provided for.—The Indians

were treated on principles of such manifest justice, that they became the friends of the new colony, and no Quaker blood was shed by them.

The high estimation of Penn, both abroad and at home, created a general desire to settle in his colony; and the persecution of the Quakers, which was then raging with unusual violence, increased the feeling. In Frankfort, Liverpool, and Bristol, emigration companies were formed; and from London, under Penn's cousin Markham as governor, in the spring of 1682, the first emigrants sailed. He himself followed in September, after a parting with his family, tender and touching as we should expect from so gentle a heart; and after an exhortation to his wife—addressed to her as though they were to meet no more—giving directions concerning his children, in a spirit of sober wisdom and Christian earnestness, which proves the mastery of one great principle through all the relations of life. It is well, before Penn enters on this new course of public enterprise as a ruler, to look into the private feelings of the man. That, however eager as a controversialist, he could be gentle and forbearing to sufferers, his letter to one of his foreign correspondents proves. For, writing to the young Countess of Falchenstun, severely tried, he recalled for her comfort his own experience, assuring her of the peace, which was to be won through suffering, and adding—"my soul hath often, in the sweet sense and feeling of the Holy Presence of God,



and the precious life of His dear Son in my heart, with great tenderness implored his Divine assistance unto thee, that thou mayest be both illuminated to do, and made willing to suffer for His sake ; that the Spirit of God and of glory may rest upon thy soul."

That he could awaken the warmest regard in others, is proved by the feelings with which the Princess Elizabeth parted with him, after he had passed some days in her company and made known to her and her attendants his views. "When the last service drew to a close, the Princess Elizabeth walked up to Penn, took him by the hand affectionately, and, offering to lead him aside, began to speak of the sense she had of God's power and presence. But emotion choked her utterance, and she sobbed out "I cannot speak to you, my heart is full." In a gentle tone Penn whispered some words of consolation in her ear. "So we left them," says Penn, "in the love and peace of God, praying that they might be kept from the evil of this world." *

But his letters at this time to his friends shew still more his real affections, called out into stronger expression by the solemnity of his parting. Thus he writes to a Somersetshire gentleman, who, though not a Quaker, had treated with indulgent kindness his Quaker son, and Penn, appreciating this, had become greatly attached to him,—“Dear Friend, in my dear

* Dixon's Life of Penn, p. 179.

and heavenly Farewell to the city of Bristol, thou wert often upon my Spirit ; and the wishes of my soul are, that the Lord would abundantly fill thee with the consolations of His Holy Spirit, and that the days, thou hast to pass on this side of the grave, thou mayest be fitting for His coming, that at what watch of the night soever it be, thou mayest awake with His likeness, and enter the rest that is eternal. The Lord is near thee, with thee, and in thee, to enlighten, melt, and refresh thee. 'Tis His presence, not seen or felt of the wicked, that gathers and revives the soul that seeks Him. So the Lord be with thee, and remember into thy bosom the sincere love thou hast shewn to thy son and his friend."

To one of his Quaker ministers he writes, "Dear Stephen Crisp, my dear and lasting love in the Lord's everlasting truth reaches to thee, with whom is my fellowship in the Gospel of Peace ; that is more dear and precious to my soul than all the treasures and pleasures of this world. For, when a few years are past, we shall all go the way whence we shall not return, and that we may unweariedly serve the Lord in our day and place, and in the end enjoy the portion of the blessed that are at rest, is the breathing of my soul. With God I leave all, and myself, and thee, and this dear people, and blessed name on earth. I am, in the antient dear fellowship, thy faithful friend and Brother."

CHAPTER V.

PENN A STATESMAN.

WITH such principles of action for his guidance, Penn set sail from Deal, in the "Welcome;" and, in a nine weeks' voyage, found his principles brought to the severest test by the visitation of the deadly small-pox, which swept away thirty out of one hundred passengers, and prostrated the whole; Penn, all the while, fearless and unwearied, acting as nurse, physician and pastor, and consigning the dead, with the last burial rites, to the deep.

From this scene of terror and suffering, he stepped on the shores of the Delaware, where the high roofs and sharp-pointed gables of Newcastle recalled the quaint streets of Leyden and Rotterdam; where the Dutch, Swedes, and Germans, who had been for some time there, with the English of later settlement, gathering in joyful holiday to the shore, crowded round their new master to bid him welcome: while he, graceful in manner and comely of person, as when he charmed the

courtly dames of St. James's, looked round with benevolent joy on the first signs of that happy commonwealth, which had been his day-dream for years. Nor were there wanting in the group the wild children of the West, leaning, with their bright-coloured feathers and many-streaked lines of paint, on their spears, fixing their eyes with keen curiosity on their new and gentle master. From Newcastle, the chief place of the Lower Province, Penn sailed up the Delaware to Chester, where the first General Assembly, elected by the colonists, met in the Friends' meeting-house, chose a Speaker, accepted the Constitution, and passed their first code of laws. Both provinces were united under their governor; and when, after a session of three days, the simple legislators were prorogued and dismissed to their several labours, the division of the territory into counties was settled, toleration of all creeds, a doctrine then unknown, was declared: the reform of the penal code, which cost Romilly, Horner, and Mackintosh so many years of toil to secure in our own day, was effected; and plans for the reformation of prisons, and for the establishment of industrial schools, were placed among the institutions of the colony.


So far before his own age, so much in advance, even up to a recent period, of our own, were the mind and policy of Penn.

It is amusing to notice the remedies now proposed by our extreme Reformers, carried out in Penn's govern-

ment,—universal suffrage, equal division of the Province into Electoral districts, and payment of the members of Assembly, who received three pence per mile for travelling, six shillings a day while in the Assembly, and the Speaker ten shillings a day.

Penn now proceeded from formal laws to social arrangements ; from a paper constitution, which a clever theorist may draw up, to the settlement of men and cities, which demands the rare union of tact, moderation, and firmness. These qualities do not seem to have been wanting in Penn. The first great question was the site of the new capital. This, after a careful survey, was fixed on the Delaware, at its junction with the Skuylkill ; and Penn, anticipating the experience which royal commissioners and parliamentary committees have at length slowly secured to us, at once sketched in his mind the site for a great city ; provided for its streets and squares, covering, as he proposed, twelve square miles ; its walks along the river, its avenues of trees, its public parks for each quarter of the town, its gardens mingling with the houses, for health as well as enjoyment. Before a stone of the future city was laid, crowds* of settlers poured in from Europe, and wintered in the caves which honeycomb the Skuylkill, and pitched their tents under the pines which fringed the Delaware. Delicate women and children engaged in this work ; sawed wood, mixed mortar, and tended the

* 3000 in the first year—(Clarkson's Penn, p. 370.)



herds and sheep. The men pushed on their harder labours. In a few months eighty-six houses, which recalled the black and white houses of Cheshire, sprang up, quays were formed; vessels were moored; ropewalks were laid out; shops opened; and farm-houses erected. The "Blue Anchor," which first occupied the strand, as a ferry-house, inn, and market exchange combined, saw round it in a single twelve-month one hundred houses; and far in the depths of the forest, three hundred smoking homesteads, and green fields, cut out of the woods, shewed, by their clearings, the vigorous footsteps of man. In two years six hundred houses were built; the land was surveyed under Penn's directions: properties were put up to auction and allotted; and manors for Penn's children, for the Quaker Fox, and for the Duke of York, formed a prudent and grateful provision.

Penn explored the Province, satisfied himself of its natural fertility, and that its climate was fitted for various produce. He dwells on its fruits and grain, its carpet of brilliant flowers, its rivers and bays ready for navigation and trade.*

Nor was the mind of the infant commonwealth neglected. School-houses of wood were set up, before the forest had been cleared; a college was designed and endowed; a printing-press established; a post in-


* See Penn's Letter to the Traders of Pennsylvania—(Clarkson's Life, p. 375, &c.)

roduced for travelling and letters ; and at the trials, at which Penn presided, ideas of witchcraft were, in a day when witches were still tried and burnt, dispelled by his plain sagacity. But the difficulty of all colonies is how to deal with the native race. The early settlers of America proved this. We have experienced it in our later colonies ; and have not yet escaped from its hazards in Australia. We are struggling with it in our South African colonies. Penn's system was his own ; and its success attracts our notice. His triumphs were due to his Christianity—to the equity of his principles, and the gentleness of his spirit. He felt towards these rude children of the forest a fatherly affection. He enquired into their faith, he looked curiously into their customs, and, while providing for their future well-being, he speculated on their origin ; convinced himself that they were of the scattered tribes of Israel, and threw the interest of a romantic origin around the children of the forest.

But, whatever his romance, his practical friendship was true. He sought them in their fastnesses, alone and unattended ; he walked with them in their forests ; he joined in their feasts, and partook of their acorns and hominy ; he sat with them on the ground under their ancient oaks, to watch, in the glade, the sports of their young men ; he joined in their exercises ; and the graceful form and sinewy person of the Saxon were found more than a match for the fore-

of the swarthy Indian. Thus he won their hearts; and, when he told them, that by force not a rood of their hunting-ground should be taken; that what was ceded by them should be paid for by him; and that, if any dispute arose, a jury of six Indians and six English should settle it,—the Indian chiefs presented the belt of peace, and declared “that they would live in peace with Onas and his children, so long as the sun and moon shall endure.”

Close by the new capital, on the banks of the Delaware, rose a gigantic elm, which had weathered a century and a half. Standing out from the deep mass of the forest, it threw its boughs over an open sward, which rose behind, in natural steps, into a green amphitheatre. Here the Indians, the Iroquois and Lenni Lenape, were wont to meet for their conferences. They named it the Place of Kings. On this spot Penn met the Indian tribes: on the one side came the old Sachem, honoured as their chief, wearing on his head the natural chaplet, symbol of royalty, surrounded by his chiefs; behind him, in rows, sat the warriors of the tribe. On the other side stood Penn, in that picturesque dress which belonged to the court of Charles, the slashed and ribboned hose, and graceful hat, with a blue sash which he always wore; then of the age of thirty-eight, and full of grace and beauty; behind him gathered a small group of faithful friends. There he rose, and addressed the Indians, in words ever memorable, as between these




wild tribes and his followers they fixed the basis of a lasting peace ; long remembered by them with grateful hearts, when, contrasting their treatment with that which they met with from other settlers, they used, with dwindled ranks and narrow boundaries, to spread, under the shade of a tree, the scroll on which were written the words of the Great Onas. This they used to read aloud, with reverence, to the youth of their tribe. Penn addressed them, in their own speech, in a few words, attesting the Great Spirit, who was their common Father, that he and his came to their land to live with them as brothers, and in peace, helping one the other, doing no harm, and feeling no fear, and having one law—the law of the Great and Just Spirit. Then he unrolled before them the scroll, on which the treaty of friendship was inscribed, whose covenants were good-will and help and kindness ; and, in case of difference, the judgment of a common tribunal.

The Indians received the treaty, as it was offered ; and on their part kept it : “ Yea, yea,” as the caustic Voltaire says, being “ better than an oath ; for, though never sworn to, it was never broken.”

Penn found, indeed, his sturdy colonists harder to deal with than the Indians. The second Assembly requested from him the power to revise and recast the constitution ; intending by this to diminish the checks retained by the executive, and concentrate further power in the hands of the Assembly. Penn’s desire, foreca

ing the possible evils only on one side, had been to prevent abuse of power by those who should rule after him. He did not sufficiently provide for the wholesome control of government. There was no grudging or self-seeking in his policy, but a generous wish for the welfare of the people; and when, in 1683, sad tidings from England—the illness of his wife, the death of Algernon Sydney, the triumph of despotism and the downfall of his visions of liberty, together with the need of protecting himself against the encroachments of Lord Baltimore—forced him to return to England, it was with a true feeling and a just retrospect, that he could convey, to those he left behind, his parting words: “My love and my life is with you, and no water can quench it, nor distance wear it out, or bring it to an end. I have been with you, cared over you, and served you, with unfeigned love, and you are beloved of me and near to me, beyond utterance. And thou Philadelphia, the larger settlement of this province, named before thou wert born, what love, what care, what service, and what travail has there been to bring thee forth, and to preserve thee from such as would abuse and defile thee.” “My soul prays to God for thee, Philadelphia, that thou mayest stand in the day of trial, that thy children may be blessed of the Lord, and thy people saved by His power.”



CHAPTER VI.

PENN A COURTIER.

Soon after Penn's arrival in England, Charles II. died ; and on the 6th of February, 1684, the eventful reign of James II. began. Penn was compelled to attend at court, to meet the rival claims of Lord Baltimore, and to entreat from the royal influence a settlement of the long-pending question (which now threatened the worst results) of the doubtful boundaries between Pennsylvania, and Maryland. But his presence at court, and his influence * with a king who had shewn him much kindness, was necessary on other grounds. During Charles's reign, no less than 15,000 Quakers (such was Penn's estimate) had been stripped of their property for conscience sake ; four thousand had rotted and died in gaol ; twelve hundred were still in prison. It was time that Penn should again appeal in their behalf, and appeal the more confidently for justice, that James,

* Such was Penn's influence that he was admitted to long audiences when nobles were kept waiting.

when Duke of York, had declared himself the friend of religious toleration. The result, not perhaps of Penn's influence, but of James's policy, was, that the prison doors were thrown open, and 1200 Quakers were set free. But the laws against religious opinions, passed in the late reign, remained in force. The Church party urged their being put in execution, and used their influence with the Commons to demand from the king their enforcement: the authorities in many parts acted upon them, and sentenced recusant Quakers to prison. Penn himself was repeatedly accused and arrested. On this ground, he felt the necessity of constant attendance at court, where his influence with the king was great, to urge adherence to a policy of toleration, and to procure royal orders for the liberation of Quakers. Through these occupations he was necessarily involved in the associations of a court life—a court, too, in which intrigue of every kind was rife, and objects, concealed and formidable, were cloaked by professions of toleration and liberality.* The disposition of Penn, which was sanguine and charitable, left him open to the solicitations of others, beyond the circle of his own sect and friends; and we find him involved in applications to James, for remission or abatement of punishment, in behalf of various offenders in the rebellions which dis-

* Penn sometimes had at his levee two hundred petitioners asking his influence with the King. (Clarkson's Life, p. 438.) He then lived in Holland house.

turbed the first year of his reign. Thus taxed, his influence involved him more deeply in court associations, and retained him near Whitehall.

There was indeed one bond of connection between James II. and the Quaker—the desire of both for religious toleration. Penn's views were consistent; and James's object, to us at least, is plain. It is clear that it was not equally intelligible to Penn, and that he was the dupe of the king's professions. This was perhaps unavoidable; for possibly even James himself could not have decided how far he loved toleration, or desired it merely for its results to his own faith. Probably he deceived himself into the notion that he was tolerant. There is little doubt that he convinced Penn that he was; and in Penn's labours, through the press and by petition, to persuade the members of the Legislature to substitute the doctrine of religious toleration for the severities of the Test Acts, the King and the Quaker acted cordially together.

But, however legitimate and consistent were his efforts at this period of his life, there is no doubt that his position at court subjected him to many imputations, and that his guilelessness deepened the suspicions.

When men saw his close connection with James, they accused him of leaning to James's faith; when they perceived his intimacy, they inferred his acquaintance with James's projects; and when they saw these relations continue, though the designs were developed, they

never doubted his guilty connivance. We cannot, therefore, wonder that he should have suffered in reputation, both in his own time and since ; nor, when we see his own sect doubting him, and the candid Tillotson staggered by his conduct, can we acquit him of * culpable imprudence. It is true that his aim was honest, and that, in the main, his motives were pure ; but his example adds another lesson, to those which history supplies, that the purest motives should not lead us into perilous associations ; and that no one has ever entered into an alliance with Popery, for objects which he believes to be good, without being made, by a power circumventing and mastering his own, to contribute some countenance to other objects, which all Protestants will pronounce to be evil.

We may justify Penn, when, on behalf of the suffering Quakers, or the exiled philosopher Locke, or those who had been condemned in Monmouth's rising, or banished in Sydney's cause, he sought and won, by persevering earnestness, from the royal favour, a tardy and ungracious pardon. We applaud him for the faithful honesty, with which he used his influence in the royal closet to mitigate severities, to introduce to James sound counsellors, and to warn him against the fatal courses into which the Jesuits were dragging him. We appreciate the natural desire, with which his sanguine

* This is well stated in the letter written to Penn in October 1688, by the Secretary of the Board of Trade. (Clarkson, p. 16.)

mind caught at the idea of a full religious toleration, as it seemed within his reach. It is not wonderful that one, who in order to compass this had sacrificed his wish to return to his favourite colony, should shut his eyes to the faults of James, and fix them on the one object he himself had in view. Nor, indeed, can we refuse him the praise of pursuing this object in the face of prejudice and opposition, and refusing to bate one iota of his claim. He forfeited the confidence of the Nonconformists of his time, and brought on himself the attacks of the Church; but we, who enjoy entire toleration, ought to appreciate Penn's endeavours. But we do not praise, nor do we acquit him, when we find him induced to become mediator, on behalf of the king, with the Fellows of Magdalen College, to persuade them to give up their rights, and to offer a submission which would for ever have tarnished their name.* No arguments should have reconciled Penn to such an office; no adequate plea can be raised in his favour.†


We acquit Penn, as the history of England after

* Clarkson admits that Penn proposed that Christ's Church and Magdalen Colleges should be given up to the Papists! (Clarkson, p. 516.)


† I put aside, as wholly insufficient, the special pleading of Mr. Dixon. But I must equally set aside, with a feeling of great regret, the charges which Mr. Macaulay has, in his history, heaped upon Penn. His confounding him with George Penne, and imputing to him a base transaction, in which that low gamester was concerned, are not to be justified. Nor was it proper, in addition to the grave blame which attached to Penn for his conduct in regard to Oxford, to add other charges which, (as Mr. Dixon has shewn) are not well-founded.

the Revolution has honourably cleared him, of the charge of favouring Popery, of connivance with Jesuits, or of abetting the infatuated policy of James; but we blush to see him separating his sect from the friends of constitutional liberty, and going, hat in hand, at the head of the Quakers, to thank James for his unconstitutional Declaration of Indulgence. True, he and his sect were not alone to blame for this; but, quite as much that system of intolerance, persevered in so long and obstinately by the Church and Parliament, as to drive the best friends of liberty to seek a refuge in alliance with tyranny, that they might escape persecution. Still, not the less is the alliance to be deplored, and those who, like Penn, abetted it, must be condemned.

But if Penn had, in this part of his conduct, fallen into error, partly through anxiety for religious freedom, and partly through the credulity of a confiding nature, the storm, which fell upon him after the Revolution, took a full revenge. He was then accused of conspiring with James's adherents. Acquitted, he was again charged; spies dogged him, informers harassed him; the Government, who disliked his position in the United States, favoured his accusers. His Irish estates were devastated, and in part confiscated; his English property, through legal chicanery, and a fraudulent steward, was fearfully injured. His colony, the child of his heart, was threatened to be wrested from him.



And when the French war broke out, *his* governor was displaced, his own authority suspended, and the governorship annexed, in spite of the charter, to the province of New York. An attempt, unworthy and scandalous, was made to break the charter; and the ingenuity of legal art was taxed to find a flaw. And at the grave of Fox, in the beginning of 1691, after Penn had pronounced over his friend the last eulogy, he himself, on the charge of a false and branded miscreant, was threatened with arrest, and had to hide himself, in order to escape prison. Thus stricken and harassed, domestic sorrow came to barb the arrow, and the wife of his heart, "the wise, the humble, the constant," heart-broken by her husband's sufferings, was struck down with fatal disease. Yet, firm and undaunted, Penn stood under the storm. "I know my enemies, their true character and history: I commit them to time, with my own conduct and afflictions." And time did him justice. He would not press for acquittal. He spent his involuntary leisure in the review, as he tells us, of his life and acts; and he gave to the world, from his retreat, two works—one on morals, the other on the promotion of peace—which shew the robust activity of his vigorous mind. In these studies he spent his hours. He declined the grateful offer of Locke to procure for him a pardon. He would not accept from the Whig Secretary of State the release, which the many friends, whom he had obliged, had




wrung from Government. He demanded justice : to be heard and cleared—not, unheard, to be dismissed. He prevailed. Before the Council in Westminster he was tried, and absolved from every charge ; and he appeared at large, to receive the last sigh of his devoted wife, who died in his arms, and to find that his eldest and favourite son was sinking in a slow decline.

CHAPTER VII.

PENN A SUFFERER.

PENN's long residence in England had not been favorable to the condition or prospects of his Colony. Difficulties had arisen, as soon as he left it. The Assembly had quarrelled with the members of Government—one they had impeached: they had put another in prison. The Council had been careless in their duties. The provisions of the Charter had been violated both by Council and assembly. Penn made a change in the members of the executive. He sent out a new Deputy: but the quarrels only increased, and his second Deputy was recalled. The original executive was restored, and a temporary harmony established, but this was broken by the contumacy of turbulent offenders, and by the onslaught now made on the independent constitution of the Colony. For, the first event which roused Penn from his grief, on account of the death of his wife, was the effort made by William's government to abolish the charter of Pennsylvania, and to form one




imperial government out of the northern colonies. This would have blasted the scheme of his life. He appealed to the Queen in Council; his case was heard; and the decision, which reserved to the Crown the right of providing for the defence of the settlement, confirmed in Penn's hands the government of his State. Penn was able, therefore, to replace his cousin in the command of the province; and to discharge the melancholy duty,—for two entire years most tenderly performed, of watching the sick-bed of his sinking son, tending him with a father's love, and cheering him with a Christian's comforts.

In April, 1696, his son died, and Penn married again, residing chiefly in Britain. Various works in defence of the Quakers, or in explanation of their opinions, with occasional ministerial visits, to the Friends through the country, and to his estates in Ireland, and an unsuccessful attempt to convert the Czar at Moscow, occupied his time. But the difficulties in which his colony was involved, through disputes between the King's revenue agent and his own Governor, and between Colonel Markham his Governor, and the Assembly, had now become so serious, that it was indispensable that Penn should go over to America; and he removed there, with his family, in the autumn of 1699, and was received with great rejoicings by the settlers. His first meeting with his Assembly took place at Philadelphia, to which he summoned them in the depth

of winter, a winter too of unusual severity, to pass two bills against piracy and illicit trade. These were passed, as he desired; nor did he forget the improvement of the city, into which he introduced some of those wise sanitary provisions, at which, a century and a half later, we are slowly arriving.* His courtesy, tact and kindness, settled the disputes, reconciled the King's agent, and restored harmony. Conferences with the Indians secured their confidence; his treaty with them in 1701 effected the alliance of the five nations; his practical suggestions improved the communication, postage and trade of the American colonies; nor did he, in these engagements, forget the instruction and improvement of the negro slaves, though thwarted in these plans by the selfishness of the Assembly. In his magnificent country-house on the Delaware, he shewed a taste for elegance and comfort, for sumptuous affluence and liberal hospitality, which modern Quakerism has not disowned. In his exquisite gardens, his spacious shrubberies, tended by skilful gardeners from Scotland, he received his visitors, or ruminated on the plans of practical improvement which occupied his mind; and in the goodly yacht, which danced lightly over the broad waters of the Delaware, he revived that love of boating which, while a boy, he had shewn, when he ran his skiff into the Cherwell and sailed his boat on the Isis. But it was no life of indul-


* Clarkson's Life, p. 223.



gent ease which he led. He received the Indian Chiefs sometimes in the open air, at other times in his house, and conferred with them, arranging various treaties, and providing for their security against imposition by the settlers, and against the introduction of ardent spirits. Here, after entertaining them in his great hall, he suffered them to dance their wild dance on his lawn, and the benevolent governor looked with interest on the rude gestures of the children of the forest. He visited them in their woods, and by the running streams under their shade; he witnessed and joined in their feasts. And so thoroughly did he win their hearts, that, when the rumour of his departure reached them, the Indians crowded from all quarters to the capital, to gaze on the familiar face and pour forth, for his safety and return, their wishes and prayers. He visited the local courts of the magistrates, and watched their administration of justice; and, not content with the duties of governor, he made circuits as a preacher; and the wondering inhabitants saw the man, whom they had witnessed, as governor, addressing his message to the assembly or negotiating with other governors of the States, enter the Quaker meeting, to exhort and preach, and kneel a suppliant in the attitude and with the accents of prayer. His humility and piety struck them more than his powers, and to these he joined a princely charity,* for to the sufferer and the poor,

* See Anecdotes, Clarkson ii. pp. 213, 230.


his heart and hand were always open. In this life of active usefulness and affluent comfort, he desired to spend the remainder of his days; and it might have been hoped that the evening of life might have so passed. But from this he was roused by a new effort, made in England, to dispossess him of his government, which, as he thought, could be thwarted only by his presence; and to England, reluctantly and sadly, he returned. He had now to learn how different from the feelings of the Indians, were those of his own colonists. In vain he applied to them, for aid to maintain the government, and supplies to defray his charges to England. Both requests were refused. The time of the assembly was spent in framing demands for concessions, and proposing alterations in the Charter; and he had to purchase harmony by enlarging their powers, and by consenting to forego his claim.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE CLOSING SCENE.

THE last scene of Penn's chequered life closed in clouds. He was, on his return to England in 1702, at the age of fifty-six. He had still a vigorous frame and a mind unbroken. But both were to be tried. He was indeed, soon relieved from the fears he had felt on the side of the Government. William was too just to tolerate the proposal to dispossess Penn of his Colony. On the death of William, the accession of Anne gave Penn a royal friend. He renewed his access to the Court, living first at Holland House and then in Knightsbridge. Godolphin was on friendly terms with him ; so was the great Marlborough. One blow came from his own circle, from the surviving son of his first and cherished wife. While Penn was settled on the Delaware, his son, now his heir, had run into excesses for which, even under the restraints of his father's eye, he had shewn a taste : and when, after Penn's return, he was sent to Pennsylvania, to try the effect of an



active life, he scandalized the province by his depravity, abjured the Quaker communion, and defied provincial authority. Forced at last, amidst mutual dislike and disgust, to return home, he brought complaints, regrets, and sorrow to his father's heart.

But a trial as keen was found by Penn, where his trusting nature had least looked for it—in the colonists, over whom he had so generously watched. So long as he had expended his own resources, with a lavish hand, in their government, they were content; but we have seen that when, with fortunes broken, and estates embarrassed, he had asked of them a temporary loan, not one farthing would the thriving settlers of Pennsylvania contribute; not one penny out of those ample means, which, through his forethought and care, they had gathered. They left him to provide, as he could, for his comfort, and even for the government. Nay, when the charter of the colony was assailed, at the close of William's reign, and when the settlers agreed that Penn's presence and personal influence in England were necessary, in vain did he represent to them, that he was without funds for his passage; they steadily refused to supply them, and left him to raise money, by the sale of a part of his Pennsylvanian domains: worse still, they took advantage of his need to propose, that he should lower the price of the unsold land, from which he drew his revenue, and

that he should hand over to them, without charge, the bay-marshes, which were of great value.

Later, when the fraud of his steward led to an attack on Penn's interest in the colony, though a few sympathized, many rejoiced, as they thought these difficulties might turn to their profit; and the mass were indifferent. With unparalleled baseness, the colonists seized Penn's land, assailed his rights, and withheld his rents. And when Penn, saddened, but not soured, by their ingratitude, sought, with weakened strength, to transfer to the colony the last days of his failing powers—when, broken in health and fortune, he asked that the colonists would settle upon him only £600 a-year, his appeal to the Friends (such friends!) was met by indifference; and, though they professed to love his person and value his presence, they would not purchase it by the sacrifice of one penny of their means. Mournful and shameful page in the history of mankind! Nor was this all; the turbulence of the Assembly, and their quarrels with Penn's deputy, suspended legislation and paralyzed government; and while the old boundary question was revived, and, an unrighteous attempt was made, in England, to assail Penn's title to the colony, he was harassed by the uncomplying and indefatigable hostility of his own Colonial Assembly. After endeavouring, through very weariness, to rid himself of the burden of his favourite colony by a cession to the Crown, and failing in this, because, with

an honourable tenacity, he insisted on maintaining their rights and liberties, he turned, in 1710, to make a final appeal to the people, whom he had so faithfully loved and served. He reminded them, in a touching letter, of their prospects and his reverses—of the wealth which they had won, and which he had lavished—of their growing resources, and his broken fortunes. He bade them remember, that it was for them that he had expended his wealth, and sacrificed a vigorous frame. He told them that, through their indifference, he had been left to poverty, and, through their refusal to help him, he had been consigned to prison. He assured them, that, still unaltered in feeling and unchanged in purpose, his only desire was for their good; that, if they indeed wished to sever their connection with him, he would yield. Let them choose a new Assembly, declare this, and decide for themselves.

This appeal reached their hearts. The selfish legislators were dismissed; and descended to the obscurity they deserved. A new Assembly was chosen, of a different temper; and, in the harmony which ensued, a ray of sunshine, after heavy clouds, came to cheer the sunset of a troubled day.

It was time. For there was added, to domestic sorrows and to colonial ingratitude, the fraud of those to whom Penn had entrusted his property, and the baseness of those who professed his faith. His steward, a Quaker, had embezzled his estate, and, withholding

his revenues, had involved him in debt to himself. On the steward's death, his family advanced an enormous claim—presented mortgages, which Penn had in ignorance signed, and threatening to arrest his person, followed him to the Friends' meeting, and, in the midst of the religious services, endeavoured to seize him. Here Penn's firm spirit did not forsake him. He offered a reasonable compromise; but, rather than pay the exorbitant demand, he threw himself, in the spring of 1708, into the Old Bailey gaol, and there the Governor of Pennsylvania, not untried in suffering, in his old age, found a refuge. The country was scandalized; Treasurer Godolphin suggested an advance of public money; the Chancellor Cowper protected him, more effectually, by a legal judgment. The Quakers rallied in his defence; his friends interfered to effect a compromise; and, by the sale of his Sussex estate, the claims, reduced and abated, were discharged.

But this blow, though it did not break his spirit, proved too much for the strength of one, who had now reached his sixty-fifth year. Up to this time he had continued to support with a robust vigour his various labours. In the midst of his vast correspondence, the growing entanglement of his affairs, and the negotiations with Government, he had contrived to write four works, and to itinerate as a Quaker preacher. Even in 1711 he edited, with an introductory preface, the works of two of his valued friends; dictating them in his

study, with his cane, as was his wont, in his hand, striking the floor, as he paced his room in the earnestness of composition. But his health now began to give way. We find him visiting Lord Oxford, and tendering, to the venerable Duke of Ormond at Whitehall, the thanks of the Friends for his kindness. But the break up of the strong man was at hand. The close air of the Old Bailey had affected his health; the pressure of so many cares had reached at last those sinewy nerves and active brain. The buoyant frame began to yield; and, though the spirit continued firm, the limbs failed. He tried the air of Brentwood, near London; he repaired to Ruscombe, in Berkshire, and tasted once more the peaceful quiet of the country scenes, in which he delighted. There, in the Spring of 1712, the first blow of paralysis struck him—a heavy shock, for he lay for weeks in a state of lethargy. Recovered from this, he resumed his colonial duties; but the pressure of them was too much for his weakened brain, and, in the Autumn, a second stroke laid him low. In three months a third shock prostrated his reason. It was well perhaps, as it spared him the knowledge (how bitter to a father!) of his eldest son's vices—vices, which at length brought him, with ruined character—though, in the end, with deep contrition—to a premature grave.

But though Penn's reason was overthrown, his temper, subdued by piety, and chastened by years of trial, was never clouded. Under a disease which tries

the strongest nerves, and often breaks the sweetest disposition, his spirit remained serene. He seemed to have passed from his troubled life and its stormy history, into the guilelessness and unconscious peace of childhood. In the sports of his grand-children he took a gentle interest. In fine weather, he led them into the fields, and watched them, as they chased the butterflies or gambolled in the meadows; he himself ever peaceful, with a radiant smile. In bad weather, he associated with them in the house, and joined with delight in their simple sports. Only when he saw his wife harassed by the pressure of many cares, from which he could no longer shelter her, or looked on that large correspondence which he could no longer conduct, did the fine countenance become overcast, and the eye droop in thought. At other times he was tranquil, and the smile of inward happiness lighted his countenance.

Thus gently did the Master, whom he had served, guide his sinking servant through five years of decay—so gently, that the children who loved, and the friends who tended him, watched with chastened sorrow, not unmingled with pleasure, the moral radiance which, in life's sunset, lingered round the mental ruin. In 1718 came release. In a quiet hamlet of Buckinghamshire, by the side of his first and much-loved wife, and of the son whom he had lost, the great philanthropist was laid to rest; among a concourse, not of Quakers only and neighbours, but of men from all parts of England,

drawn together by the fame of so many virtues, and the wish to do them homage ; a few words were spoken, by those who knew him, to the throng, who had heard of his merits ; and they laid him in the grave, which closed over great services and an illustrious name. No stone was set to mark the spot ; but the name and services of Penn are written in the durable monument of religious toleration, which he secured ; in the unswerving integrity, which he practised ; and in the institutions of one of those great States of the Western World, which now exercise so wide an influence over the destiny of mankind.

And here this sketch of the origin of English Quakerism should close ; but we linger over the traces of a sect, which is as remarkable for its deeds of beneficence as for its eccentricities. Quakerism indeed has added a strange chapter to the varieties of English belief. The Friends live among us, and are to be found in our seats of business and wealth, and yet retain that quaint dress and speech and worship, which they derived from the odd shoe-maker of the reign of Charles I. But while we smile at the singularity, we must not forget the service ; great service rendered to humanity—conquests won over suffering and wrong. Their victories have been bloodless, though they cost them labour and sometimes life. The Quakers were the first to demand liberty of conscience ; we owe to them that


toleration of opinion, which, at this time, on the continent of Europe is not admitted,—not even believed to be possible. They won that toleration by their kindness, their patience, an almost fabulous endurance, and an invincible charity ; but their services were not confined to this result. The Quakers first demanded * the emancipation of the slave ; Penn lifted his voice against the traffic in slaves ; the first Petition to Parliament against slavery came from the Quakers, and they first bound themselves to put it down. The Quaker, Clarkson, anticipated the labours of Wilberforce : in the Quakers, Wilberforce found his firmest friends ; and their zeal, unabated by a century of effort, cheered and sustained Fowell Buxton. To the Quakers our prisons owe their improvement, and our criminal law its mitigation ; they first taught us, by their benevolent example, how to cure the sorest of human diseases, and in their hands, cells, where lunacy had been goaded to frenzy, became merciful instruments of relief. In the Quaker, William Allen, we lost the fast friend of the education of the poor ; the Gurneys have set our merchants an example of princely beneficence, and, from the Quaker ranks, came that gentle visitant

* In the Quakers' yearly meeting in 1696 in America, in 1727 and 1760, in London, the Quakers excluded from their body all who partook of the traffic. The Quakers, Miffen in 1770, and David Barclay in 1785, emancipated their slaves. In 1769, the Quakers presented their first petition to Parliament.

of our crimes and sorrows, whose life in our prisons was, like Dante's angel-mission, a pathway of light through darkness.

We cannot therefore leave, without interest, a sect illustrated by so much virtue, and we can find it in our hearts to love even the dress and language, which recal so many passages of goodness.

Still we ought not to shrink from the moral of the Quaker history. They were, as a sect, earnest in their outset, strict in their aim and true; but they committed the great fault, of rejecting all provision for a Christian ministry, and those ordinances which present and perpetuate Religion. They were subject therefore, from the first, to the license of unbridled imaginations, and they often mistook the dreams of a morbid fancy for the Revelation of truth. As they became more numerous and less earnest, other faults appeared. Then was felt the want of a ministry, set apart to rebuke worldliness, and of ordinances, which could withstand or expose error. The system depended on individuals; and individual impressions are wavering and transient. It was soon discovered that oddity of speech did not separate a man from the world, that a grey silk bonnet might envelope vanity, and a broad brim might cover selfish avarice. It appeared that singularity and piety were not synonymous, and that hatred of vice did not always accompany hatred of tythes. It was perceived that, after all, the best training for character is through the dis-



charge of common duties, and that the best guarantees for religion are found in obedience to that Word, which directs us to the provision for a ministry, and to the ordinances of a Church.

Third Sketch.

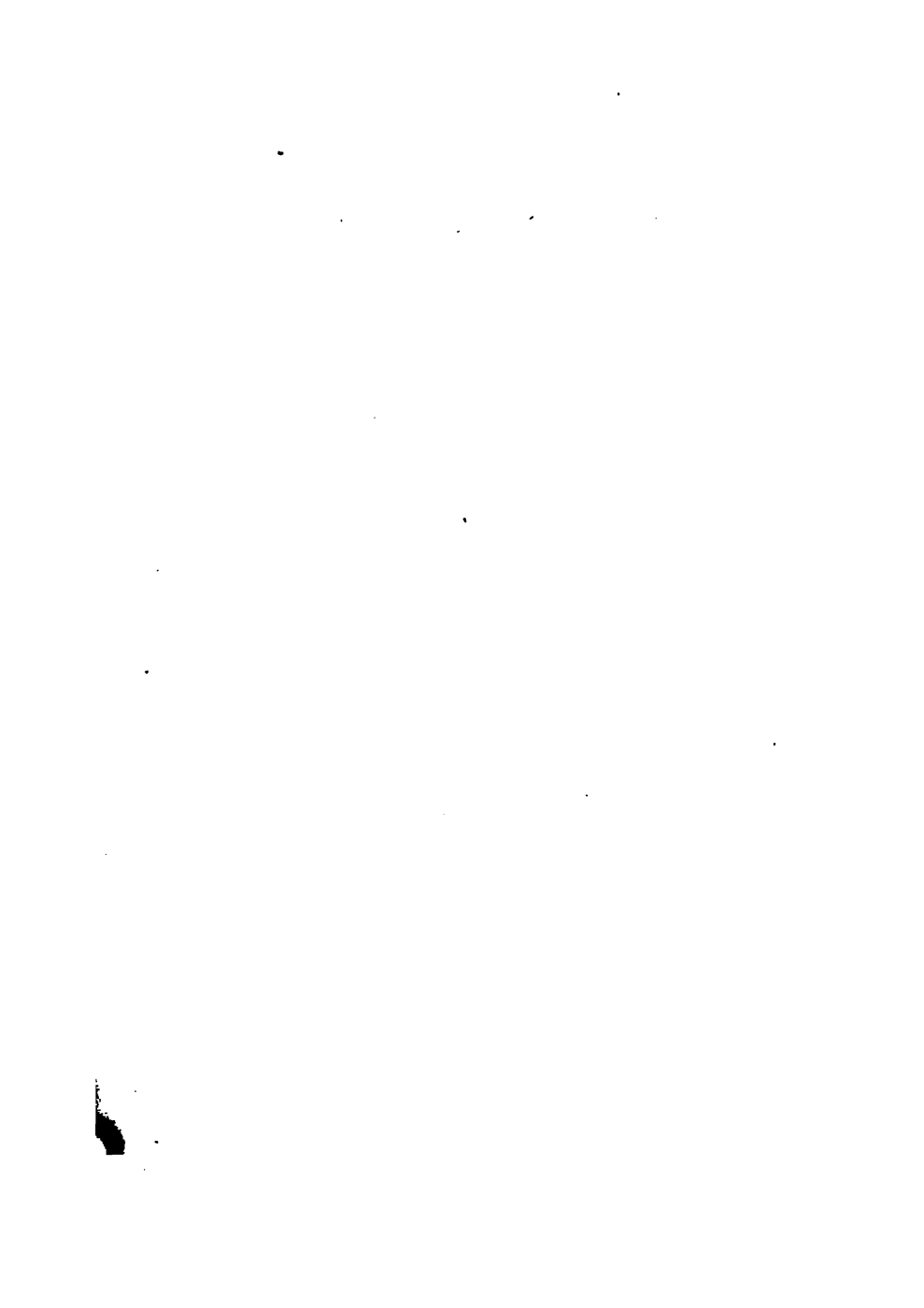
ENGLISH METHODISM.

I have derived my information from John Wesley's Works, 14 vols ; from the "JOURNAL AND POETRY OF CHARLES WESLEY," 2 vols ; "LIFE OF JOHN WESLEY," by Rev. H. Moore, 2 vols ; "LIFE OF CHARLES WESLEY," by Jackson, 2 vols ; Watson's "OBSERVATIONS ON SOUTHEY ;" Watson's "LIFE OF WESLEY ;" Southey's "LIFE OF WESLEY," 2 vols ; "WESLEY AND METHODISM," I. Taylor ; Alexander Knox's "REMAINS ;" "CENTENARY OF WESLEYAN METHODISM ;" "REPORT OF THE WESLEYAN CENTENARY FUND ;" "PHILIPS' LIFE AND TIMES OF GEORGE WHITFIELD."

Section First.

THE FOUNDERS OF ENGLISH METHODISM.

WESLEY AND WHITFIELD.



CHAPTER I.

THE STRENGTH OF METHODISM.

ANY view of the religious movements, which have affected the condition and Church of England, would be incomplete, which did not include some sketch of the Methodists. That body has now been organized for above a century, and, if we put together the various sections, into which it is divided, it will be found to number in England at least a million of members*; to supply accommodation in its Chapels for two millions and a quarter of the population, and to be served by 1800 ministers, and 28,000 local preachers. In America it has 1,200,000 members, and 9000 ministers and preachers. It is vigorous in the West Indies, in British North America, and Australia. It has branches in the Channel Islands, and in France. It has sent forth

* See the census tables : In Yorkshire, Methodism supplies nearly the same amount of accommodation as the Church ; a much larger amount than the Church in Durham and Cornwall—while in Northumberland, Staffordshire, Lancashire, Lincolnshire and Wales, it is strong in numbers.

missions to the Heathen, where it occupies above 200 stations ; employs nearly 500 missionaries, and its missions are sustained by an income of upwards of £100,000 a year. In Great Britain, it possesses numerous schools, well frequented ; a Training School for 100 Teachers, with a practising school of 1000 children, and two Colleges for the education of its ministers.* It presents this feature, that, though separated from the Church of England, and not, as it seems, likely to be reunited, it maintains, towards the Church, the friendly attitude which at first distinguished it.

Its congregations are indeed separated from the Church, and its preachers are often the opponents of the Anglican Clergyman. But the councils of the body are friendly, and, when dissenting or political enmity has threatened the Church of England, the Methodists have always ranged themselves on its side. This tendency they derive from their founders, whose authority is still great with them ; and it is not a little remarkable, that, whatever zeal the Methodist Society has produced, those, who remain its chiefs, are the men who established it. Mahomet indeed, or Loyola might envy the power of John Wesley ; certainly *they* did not wield over their followers a more unchallenged ascendancy. Wesley's writings are still the depository

* The Wesleyans alone have 447 day-schools, with 246 trained teachers in them. They have 401,000 Sunday scholars, of whom 159,000 attend day-schools. (See Report of Conference at Birmingham, August, 1854.)

of Methodist views, his rules still guide the society; his laws are unchanged; the deed drawn up by him is still their Magna Charta. If you ask a Methodist for the history or doctrines of his sect, he places in your hands the Journal and Sermons, the Commentary and Letters of John Wesley.

Over a smaller section of Methodists, the authority of George Whitefield prevailed. But the traces of his influence are faint, and his power has hardly survived him. While he lived, he was a master—and he exercised, as an orator, a vast ascendancy. I cannot do justice to the history or principles of Methodism, without presenting a sketch of both these remarkable men. For a time their history runs in the same channel—but the streams soon diverge, and we shall follow each separately to its close.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY YOUTH OF THE LEADERS.

JOHN WESLEY was born at Epworth, in Lincolnshire, on the 17th of June, 1703. He was the son of parents who presented, in their family history, traces of the opinions which had divided the Church of England. The grandfather, and great-grandfather of Mr. Wesley by the father's side, and his grandfather by the mother's side, Samuel Annesley, had been exiled from their livings in Dorsetshire for their Puritan offences and non-conformity. They lived as men of piety, and died in peace. Wesley's father had, in early life, separated from the Dissenters, whose opinions, in the reigns of Charles and James the Second, had excited his aversion ; he was an earnest Protestant, and had condemned the Romish policy of James. Occupying after the Revolution the living of Epworth, he thence attended the Convocations, held during the reigns of William and Anne ; and, as an earnest high churchman, he held on his way, through a life distinguished for useful labours. He lived till

1735, long enough to influence the character of his son and to observe his decision ; he died in peace, having preached, in the Church, the same rules of Christian faith, which his forefathers had exemplified as Nonconformists.

The mother of John Wesley had exercised a yet stronger influence on her son John. The decision of her character was shewn in holding religious meetings, during her husband's absence in London. Her letters to her son, when his mind was beginning to develop itself, mark her vigorous judgment, which enabled her to distinguish between enthusiasm and piety, and to reject the practice of asceticism as a substitute for the discharge of duty.

Under such counsels, the boy grew. He received his first instruction in the Charter-house, where he shewed the decision of his character, and where his scholarship was exercised in learning Hebrew, as well as Greek and Latin. At sixteen he went to Christ Church, Oxford, and acquired distinction ; he studied with unbending determination before and after his degree, and became a proficient in mathematics ; but, as he approached the time when he was to enter Orders, he began to regard with increasing seriousness his future profession. He then set himself to follow rules, which he laid down for the improvement of his character. He was ordained Deacon by the Bishop of Oxford (afterwards Archbishop Potter) in 1725, in his 22nd year,

was elected fellow of Lincoln, and soon after was named Greek Lecturer. He was removed from these ascetic resolutions and from the labours of the University, to assist his father, whose strength was failing from age. While acting as his father's curate, in Lincolnshire, he received priest's orders at Oxford, and returned, at the injunction of his College, after two years of a curate's life, to preside, as moderator, at the disputations of the students: a practice which sharpened his wit and exercised his powers of reasoning.

It was after his return to Oxford, in the autumn of 1729, that the bent of his mind shewed itself. His first religious masters were Thomas á Kempis and Jeremy Taylor. From them he derived a disposition to asceticism, and the conviction, that it was by these practices and by unrelenting determination, that piety could be attained. His deference however for his parents, led him to seek their advice. His father, though admiring the piety of his favourite author Thomas á Kempis, and admitting that to our corrupt nature the denial of self was essential, corrected the undue rigor of ascetic tendencies, and presented to his son, as the result of his own experience,—“whom time had already shaken by the hand, and death was but a little way behind,” that the best preparation for his pastoral work was to “Fast, watch, and pray, love, endure, and be happy.” His mother added her prudent suggestions; and shewed her son, that the best rule for life was, to avoid all “that

impaired the tenderness of conscience and obscured the sense of God." In addition to these counsels, he received from a friend, whom he visited in Lincolnshire, a hint which sank into his mind, and served to moderate his tendency to the life of a recluse. "Sir," said he, "you wish to serve God and go to heaven. Remember, you cannot serve him alone : you must therefore find companions or make them ; the Bible knows nothing of solitary religion."

Companions of his religious course were now preparing for him. The most distinguished of these were two. His brother Charles, five years younger than himself, had been educated like Mr. Wesley's other children, by their mother, and sent to Westminster School. While there, he distinguished himself by a generous courage, which led him to protect a timid Scotch boy ; bullied by his schoolfellows for his Jacobite connections, but afterwards known as the great Lord Mansfield. There was another curious incident of his school life : Garrett Wesley, a gentleman of fortune in Ireland, was looking for an heir, and finding that Charles bore his name, he assisted the boy's education, and offered, if he would go to Ireland, to adopt him. The simple-minded pastor referred the decision to his son. The boy declined the proposal, and the name and wealth of Mr. Wesley passed to a kinsman, who rose to distinction and to the peerage of Mornington, and bequeathed wealth and honors to his grandchildren, two of whom were destined

to achieve higher names, as the Marquis Wellesley and the Duke of Wellington. From Westminster, Charles Wesley was sent to Christ Church, Oxford, and led for the first year a life of idleness ;—but in 1728 the lad of nineteen turned to more serious study, and along with it to more earnest thought. He entered into communication with his brother John, which, up to that time, he had avoided ; and, as John Wesley was then absent from Oxford, he sought his advice by letter. With his sanction he adopted a peculiar method of life, both in respect to study and religion, which, as two or three other lads associated themselves with him, procured for them the name of Methodists. When John Wesley returned to Oxford, in the autumn of 1729, he found a small society, noticed by their companions as eccentric, but fervent in devotion, earnest in study, active in benevolence, and united in feeling. They welcomed John Wesley as their chief.

To Charles, the aged father gave his counsels and prayers ; he cheered his sons in their benevolent labours, but he added needful caution, “ My daily prayers,” he says ; “ are that God would keep you humble. Be never weary in well doing ; never look back, for you know the prize and the crown are before you. Preserve an equal temper of mind, whatever treatment you meet with from a not very just or well-natured world.” The example of the father’s piety was however more persuasive to the mind of his son than his words. Charles

thus speaks of his father's end, which had deeply impressed him. "The few words he could utter," he writes to his brother from Epworth, in April 1735, "I saved, and I hope never to forget; 'Nothing too much to suffer for heaven. The weaker I am in body, the stronger and more sensible support I feel from God. The inward witness,—this is the proof, the strongest proof of Christianity: God does chasten me with pain, yea, all my bones with strong pain, but I thank him for all, I bless him for all, I love him for all.'"

It was under such training that Charles Wesley grew. His father had said in his last moments, laying his hand affectionately on the dutiful head of the lad, "Be steady, the Christian faith will surely revive in this kingdom. You shall see it, though I shall not."

There was indeed need of revival. For so general was the spirit of infidelity, that the authorities of Oxford issued a warning edict against it in 1732, and the Master of University College preached two sermons to the young men on the subject. In this matter however, as in others where the morals of England were concerned, it was not by authority but by suasion, not by might but by worth, that reformation was to be achieved.

The other associate of John Wesley was George Whitefield. This singular man, little less famous than Wesley, sprung from the lowest ranks. Born at the Bell Inn in Gloucester in 1714, educated in the parish school of St. Mary's, then a drawer in the Inn, he

arrived, by a series of strange circumstances, at Pembroke College, Oxford, in the position of a Servitor.


His mother's affection had discovered the boy's capacity, to which his own careless habits had made him indifferent ; for the character of Whitefield was very distinct from that of Wesley. His passions were strong ; he had desires for good, but a keen appetite for evil ; and, as these tendencies alternately swayed him, he vacillated between plans of virtue and the indulgence of vice. At times he studied Thomas à Kempis, and attended assiduously his church. At times he associated with rakish companions, joined in their sports, and plunged in their debaucheries. Yet, during this season of passion and remorse, the mind shewed its bent. Already, as a boy at school, he displayed a taste for oratory and dramatic representation ; and his composition of sermons, during that period, proved that to the ministry of the Church his tastes were even then directed. But, before he went to Oxford, the lad of seventeen underwent a change. He threw off his associates, broke through his worst habits, and set himself, with firm purpose, to practise virtue. His attendance on public worship was regular, his prayers fervent, his study of Scripture sincere. On his arrival at Oxford, he looked with sympathy to the small band, who were now attracting the notice and ridicule of the undergraduates.

To this band he joined himself, followed their doctrine, adopted their practice, and vied with them in the severe asceticism of their early habits. We are reminded,

when reading the narrative of their practices, of those of the Tractarian school ; abstinence from food, pushed to the injury of health, long fasts, protracted vigils, bodily mortification, painful postures, wearying observances, were used by them, as by all men of earnest superstition, to subdue the senses and tame the will ; and in all cases with a like result, a harassing sentiment of utter failure. During this stage of Methodism there was sincerity, but exaggeration ; zeal and superstition. Never indeed did men set themselves to work out their salvation with a more desperate resolution, than did those, whose errors it is our duty to censure, but who present to us a spectacle of fortitude and fervency, which it is impossible not to admire.

Of the company, then gathering at Oxford, and which now began to be familiarly known by the nickname of Methodists, John Wesley was the leader. He owed this preeminence not to his ambition, but to his earnestness, his activity, and perseverance. Whatever he did, he did with all his heart. To him therefore, his companions naturally turned for counsel and direction.

One day in the week he gave to correspondence with religious enquirers. He studied hard, had great collectedness of mind, and had brought his feelings under severe control. To himself he was stern, forbearing to others ; his time was given up to works of charity, to visiting the prisons, and to the poor. His brother Charles, more gentle and sensitive, turned with deference to the guidance of that stronger mind.




CHAPTER III.

THE DAY OF ASCETICISM—THE DAWN OF TRUTH.

AT this time, in 1735, the call of duty, as they interpreted it, led both the Wesleys to America. In their mission to Georgia, they first fell in with Moravians, on shipboard, and afterwards in the colony ; and their intimacy with them formed a turning-point in their history.

In their conversation with the Moravians, and still more in the observation of their happiness, the Wesleys perceived the mistake into which they had fallen ; they discovered that the ascetic life, on which they had relied as an instrument of progress, was ineffectual,—that the effort to subdue the passions of their nature by violence and mortification, might exhaust, but could not reclaim them. A greater power, they now perceived, was needed. Their first meeting with the Moravians was followed, some years after, in England, by further intercourse more intimate and influential. But in their



conversation with them, at this time, and in the observation of their mode of life, they first discovered that there were ways of attaining piety more effectual than those on which they had hitherto relied.

But the glimpses of this truth began to dawn on them slowly. They carried to Georgia the formality and rigid rules of a monastic life. Wesley, a stickler for the strictest observance of the rubric, introduced into the practice of the church in the colony new modes of administering the ordinances. He rejected many persons from the sacrament ; he would not give the communion to Dissenters, unless re-baptized ; he repelled sponsors, if they were not communicants ; and he would not read the burial service over schismatics.

These practices, and this temper, became a source, to him, of numberless trials, during the two years of his colonial residence. Loudly did Governor Oglethorpe complain, that, while in bringing the Wesleys to the colony, he had hoped to introduce love, meekness, and harmony, he found the churches emptied, and the congregations estranged ; strict observances, but a demoralized population.

After two wretched years passed in America, Wesley returned to England. His work in the colony had been a failure. His own state of mind we gather from his diary. He had been zealous beyond example, rigorous to himself, fertile in efforts ; but in his labours he had gathered neither fruits nor friends. He was

marked for his diligence, noted for his courage, but no man drew to him—no one loved him.

Referring to this epoch of his life, he thus retraces his mental history. At the age of twenty-two, after a boyhood and youth exemplary and regular, he had resolved to enter Holy Orders. "Then I began to alter the whole form of my conversation, and to set in earnest upon a new life. I set apart an hour or two a day for religious retirement. I communicated every week. I watched against all sin, whether in word or deed. I began to aim at, and pray for inward holiness. By my continued endeavour to keep God's law, to the utmost of my power, I was persuaded that I should be accepted of him, and that I was even then in a state of salvation. I began visiting the prisons, assisting the poor and sick. . . I abridged myself of all superfluities, and many that are called necessities of life. The next spring, I began observing the Wednesday and Friday fasts, commonly observed in the ancient church, tasting no food till three in the afternoon. And now I knew not how to go any further. I diligently strove against all sin. I omitted no sort of self-denial. I carefully used all the means of grace. I omitted no occasion of doing good. Yet, when, after continuing some years in this course, I apprehended myself to be near death, I could not find that all this gave me any comfort or any assurance of acceptance with God."

He then tried to rest his confidence in the Church

its unity, and its rule of faith : the unity by following the rule—*quod ab omnibus, quod ubique, quod semper creditum*, —but these views gave him no comfort.

Then he tried the mystics, who recommended mental prayer, as the mode of union with God—but “I had no heart, no vigor, no zeal in obeying ; continually doubting whether I was right or wrong.”

“I was indeed fighting continually without conquering. I fell and rose, and fell again.”

He set himself to root out of his heart each of the evils he found there, pride, anger, self-will, but found, after a hard trial, that his enemy retained the hold, nay, was even increased in strength.

“On my return to England, Jan. 1738, being in imminent danger of death, and very uneasy on that account, I was strongly convinced that the cause of that uneasiness was unbelief ; and that the gaining a true, living faith, was the one thing needful for me. But still I knew not that I was wholly void of it.”

These pages of Wesley’s journal, which reflect the perplexities of his mind, form a striking contrast with the cheerful character of its later chapters, and lead us to ask, what were the views of Divine truth which he, after his return from America, adopted, and in which he found both peace and purity.

The doubting, worn, harassed ascetic is a very different man from the hopeful, joyful, and energetic Christian. Yet the two characters grew, within a short interval, on the same mind.

It was in Oxford that Wesley had first plunged into the austerities of his religious life. From Oxford he carried to America his doubts and austerities. In Oxford he found, at length, the convictions which changed his character. Yet he found them, not in books, learned divines, or philosophers, but in the conversation of a simple man.

The Moravian, Peter Boëhler, had come to the famous university of Oxford, sent by the Moravians, who had at that time a strong wish to be united with the church of England. Boëhler brought with him neither reputation nor talent ; but, in his short stay he exercised influence over one mind, which changed the moral aspect of England. "What a work," says Charles Wesley, speaking of Boëhler, "hath God begun since his coming into England. Such a one as never shall come to an end." The simple German, of strange dress and rude gait, might be seen walking through the avenues of Christ Church, on the banks of the Isis and Charwell, in converse with a man whose peculiar habits and rigid rules had already attracted the notice of the University. The undergraduates smiled at the pair, and quizzed the dress and manners of the stranger. But the conversation between them went on uninterrupted, for it had intense interest for both. Wesley was a subtle logician, trained in the learning of the schools—of copious reading, and much power of argument. But he was in this case no match for the


rugged German. He indeed affected no learning, and knew little of the Fathers, but he was versed in Scripture, and had become imbued with its wisdom. To Scripture, in his discussions with Wesley, he constantly appealed; and, after a stubborn resistance, the simplicity of his arguments prevailed. Wesley's doubts were cleared, and truth at length broke on the perplexed mind of the unsatisfied enquirer.

He became convinced, as he tells us, "that he must renounce all dependence, in whole or in part, on his own works and righteousness, and place a full reliance on the blood of Christ shed for him, and trust in him as his sole justification, sanctification, and redemption." *

This conviction he felt he had not yet attained, but he recognized it to be God's gift; and "that He would surely bestow it on every soul, who earnestly and perseveringly sought it."

To strengthen these impressions he repaired to the settlement of the Moravians at Herrnhut, and there he saw practical religion influencing men to works of charity, and self-denial; free from ascetic rigor. The result was to settle his convictions; and to send him back, to England, with altered opinions, to enter on the mission of his life. It was a great mission, but sorely needed, for never before had England fallen so low; ignorance, scepticism, venality, licentiousness, ran wild, and covered the land.

* Moore's Life of Wesley, p. 389.



CHAPTER IV.

THE DARKNESS OF ENGLAND AND THE LIGHT.

It seemed strange, yet it was natural, that, after the excitement of the seventeenth Century, England should have sunk into torpor. The religious controversies that had exercised all parties from the Reformation to the Restoration, the heats, antipathies, and disputes had disappeared. The spell of an enchantment seemed to have touched her, and her sects and disputants, Puritans and Zealots, Nonconformists and Churchmen, had fallen into a deep sleep. The cries, the names, the by-words were well nigh forgotten, and over the field of this passionate conflict there had passed the stillness of a death-like calm. The chapels of the Puritans had lapsed into other hands; and their pulpits, once familiar with the language of Baxter, Henry, and Owen, gave forth the drowsy tones of the Indifferentist and Socinian.

The Non-conformists had been rescued from the fury of mobs and the fangs of the law; magistrates

ceased to vex and judges to imprison them ; but with their sufferings, as martyrs, their virtues, as Christians, had disappeared.

It is a melancholy thing to read in the pages of their advocate (Calamy) the accounts of the verbal disputes, paltry wrangling, and bitter controversies, which now divided the Dissenters. Worse still to observe that many of their differences arose from the wish of large sections among them to escape from the inconvenient bondage of Scripture. Under the plea of relief from articles and confessions, they sought liberty to hold Arian and Socinian heresies.*

The only evidence they gave of earnestness was in their claims for political exemption, and they beset the ante-chamber of the minister to plead for remedial laws.† Their Puritan ancestors would have marvelled to find chapels, which they had built, filled with the very errors they had died to repudiate.

If however the Dissenters had lapsed into heresy, the Church had fallen also—not quite so low, but the fall was great, and from it neither her endowments, nor her Articles, nor her Convocation had preserved her. She had obtained, from the State, all that she had asked. She was preserved from all that she had feared. Her liturgy was unaltered. Her pale was not extended. She was great, in political power, in the reign of Charles

* Calamy's Life, Vol. i. pp. 338, 351, 372, 404 ; Vol. ii. pp. 417, 425, 452.

† Calamy, Vol. ii. pp. 453, 466.

II. Her influence in the nation was deeply felt by James II. She was strong in the legislature in the reign of William III.; still stronger in that of Anne. The cry of 'the Church in danger,' was sufficient to turn an election and upset a ministry: bills against Dissenters,—tests imposed—penalties upheld—distinguished or disgraced the Parliaments of William, Anne, and George I. Even Walpole, a Whig, conciliatory, moderate, and powerful, though he courted the Dissenters, and used them, dared not relieve them. The church, thus strong in England, was supreme in Ireland. The Irish primate was the chief of one of the great parties in the Irish Parliament; managed elections, and ruled Lord-Lieutenants. But with all this apparent power, had come real weakness; with this outward show of strength, the church was decaying. In her Convocation, disputes were rife. Her writings marked her divisions, and decline. Those who rose to her posts of authority, were* denounced as a disgrace to her; and the recriminations of the lower clergy against the Bishops, were so fierce, when they met in Convocation, that the State could only stop the scandal, by closing the Synod.

Yet, while we dislike the passions which disgraced one of her parties, we are no less shocked by the errors which characterized the other. Atterbury and Sacheverell are odious for their coarse ambition, but not less

* In the language applied to Bishop Burnet, and Bishop Hoadley.

deplorable was the theology of the favourites of the Court. It was painful to hear Sacheverell pollute the pulpits of Holborn, but it was no less scandalous to find Clarke distilling Arianism in the church of St. James. But while those, who governed the Church and adhered to it, could not be praised, as little could be said of those who from intolerance had left it. Attempts have been made of late to revive admiration for the Non-jurors. There were among them, as in Bishop Ken, virtues beyond all praise. But there was in the Church, piety quite as eminent, with a spirit of larger wisdom. There were Tillotson, Benson, Wilson, Secker, and Hervey; among the laity, Boyle, Evelyn, and Addison. These men gave brighter examples of religion than we find in the sour captiousness of the Nonjurors. The undisguised Romanism of their sacramental teaching was accompanied by a narrow bigotry, which influenced and disgraced them. They would tolerate no one, who was not as intolerant as themselves.* Among such internal divisions, is it wonderful that the Church became weak? The sordidness and low motives of the parochial clergy destroyed their influence. Men looked down on those who had no respect for themselves. They clung to the skirts of a patron, and hung as dependants in his ante-chamber. With the people they had no weight. When a large body of the clergy sought to be relieved

* See their treatment of Bishop Ken.

from subscription to articles, which they had long disavowed, they only made the public admission of a fact, then notorious, that they sought freedom, because they loved licence. Yet this must be said ; it was not episcopacy which caused the decline of the Church of England. Presbytery had fallen quite as low. The Church of Scotland could not lift up her heel against her neighbour. The fact is, that neither articles nor forms can keep a clergy from declension. The Church of Scotland proves this. She too had seemed to triumph, and after a sharp struggle, had crushed her Episcopalian rival ; but Presbytery came back to power, shorn of strength. The spirit of her founders had disappeared ; the virtues of Knox and Henderson were gone : the torpor of indifference paralyzed her frame. She cast out from her communion the virtues which disturbed her, and, having exiled the Seceders, delivered herself over to a sleep, which held her for a hundred years.

The condition of the English nation declined with that of her Church. There never was a period in England of lower morality. I am inclined to think that the political and social annals of the two first Georges are more discouraging than those of the two last Stewarts. No doubt the vices of Charles and James were more scandalous, the treason and turpitude of their public men was more ostensible,—but there was a baseness and coolness in the profligacy, of the courts and Par-

liaments of George the First and Second, which was unequalled. Under Charles the Second we are refreshed by the virtues of Evelyn and Russell; and we trace with interest the lives of Baxter and Henry. But under the Georges, the eye turns for some green spot, and in vain. The coarse sensuality of George the First and his court was equalled by the low vices of his more coarse successor. The celebrity of Queen Caroline was owing more to cleverness than to goodness. The manners of that court, as we have them now exposed to us,* present a picture of morals, of which the worst household of England would be ashamed. The political life corresponded with that of the court. The bribes of Walpole were a system; they were taken by three-fourths of the House of Commons. Those only refused them, who wanted to be in power, in order to offer them. The Pulteneys and Pelhams, Carterets and Chesterfields, Townshends and Walpoles, the first Pitt and Fox pass before us in the gallery of statesmen, stained by a vice of selfish place-hunting, which our day would not endure.

Among the people, vices abounded; drinking to excess, riot, ignorance, violence, cruelty, the neglect of the poor, the oppression of the weak; our mad-houses a scandal—our prisons a horror; hardly a sign of earnestness or humanity. We wade through these annals,

* See Lord Hervey's Memoirs.

and wonder, as we read them, whether we shall ever again open the records of honesty and worth.

It was at this time, and under this state of things, that God was pleased, in His mercy, to rouse England in a singular way.

In the year 1738, while George II. reigned, while Walpole was Premier, but his long reign drew to a close; when Pitt had just begun to run his course in Parliament, and Bolingbroke was declaiming philosophy, and Chesterfield, rules of taste; and Pope wrote satires; and Thomson had just published his Seasons; and Isaac Watts still wrote hymns; and Young meditated his Night Thoughts; Garrick and Samuel Johnson had entered London to seek their fortunes; and the gloomy Swift had produced his last work; and Butler, having written his Analogy, had stepped into the Bishoprick of Bristol; and Bishop Wilson still lived to bless the island of Man, John Wesley, came, a sturdy traveller, from Herrnhut to London. Unknown, unsung by poets, unheeded by statesmen, unheard of in court or country, he entered London to make for himself a greater name than Carteret or Pelham; and to leave a larger and more lasting party, than followed Pulteney or Walpole. It is a matter of interest, to enquire by what method this man produced on his age so strong an impression; and by what acts or services, he won for himself so great a name.

I have already spoken of the moral character of England, and of the decline which involved her religious parties. But we must remember, that, while this decline had swept all other sects into the vortex of error or indifference, the Church of England stood, lowered indeed, and weakened, but entire. The Puritans had sunk, and the Presbyterians had fallen, but there still were found in the Church many earnest men, who continued buoyant amidst a general decline. It is true that they were not numerous enough to correct the national degeneracy; nor could their services, however pure, nor their form of prayer, however spiritual, avail without the living pastor. For the purest ritual falls dead from the mouth of a drowsy advocate, and even Scripture passes, like the wind, from careless lips to heedless ears. Yet the Liturgy was of lasting value. It encased the truth. It held it fast, and kept it sound for better times. It did more. It instructed minds that were in earnest. So that even this age had, in the high places of the Church, Butler, Sherlock, and Benson, and the apostolic piety of Bishop Wilson; in humbler stations, many pastors as faithful as the good Rector of Epworth. These men led their flocks, by paths unknown to the world, to sources of strange comfort,—comfort, which they had themselves derived from the services of their Church; and to which they guided their humble followers.

Nor should we forget, that when better times came,

often (as in the case of Whitefield and Wesley, and, in later days, of Simeon and Venn) thoughts of good and its inspirations fell on them, through these services of deep solemnity,—through the sober words of antient prayer. This testimony is due to the Church of England; before we enter on the review of her shortcomings and faults. And even in these it will appear, while we trace the rise of Methodism, that its love of order, plan of discipline, and scheme of subordination were derived from minds trained within the Church, and submitted by long use to her strictest rules. It was reluctantly, that John Wesley left the path of ecclesiastical order for a more eccentric orbit; and even in traversing this, he still turned his eye back to the firmament, which he had left with an unwilling heart. His course was determined by circumstances, not altogether under his control; partly, by the impulse of his associates,—not least by the influence of that remarkable man, of whom I shall speak first, because, in his history we trace most plainly the impelling forces, out of which Methodism sprung.

Section Second.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD.



CHAPTER I.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD—HIS WORK.

WE have brought the history of **GEORGE WHITEFIELD** to the time when, settled in Oxford, he was received into the intimacy of the Wesleys, and shared their opinions. Out of this gloomy system he passed, earlier than John Wesley and more easily, as his mind was simpler, and less exercised in scholastic subtlety.

His sense of sin, he tells us, brought him to his knees, and forced him to feel that neither observances nor obedience could lessen his guilt. His Greek Testament he studied carefully ; he pored, and prayed over it, often in tears, pondering it word by word. The commentary of Henry, the contemplations of good Bishop Hall aided him. These were his teachers. Thus he received "the good old doctrine of the Church of England ;" that the blood of Christ removes the guilt of human sin. Resting on this, he felt the load drop from him ; joy so deep arose, that he could not avoid breaking forth in songs of praise ; peace so complete

possessed him, that he poured forth his feelings in prayer. His joyful piety found its natural vent in benevolent effort. The stripling became the missionary, the visitor of the sick, and comforter of the sad. Unwearied in these offices at Oxford, he enlarged them on his return to Gloucester, with such earnestness, that the good Bishop Benson, observing this, offered to ordain him. Whitefield was under twenty-one years of age, and the Bishop's rule was, to ordain only at the age of twenty-three. In June 1736, after earnest thought in a spirit of great devotion, Whitefield was ordained at Gloucester, in the church of St. Mary de Crypt, where he had been baptized; and he preached his first sermon to a congregation, which had traced and noted his wayward path. His success in the pulpit was beyond precedent. From Gloucester he was summoned to preach in Bristol, and thence to serve the church of one of his friends in London. At Bristol, all classes crowded to hear him. His warnings aroused thousands. The churches were as full on week-days, as on Sundays. Unprecedented collections answered his appeals. A second visit to Bristol only deepened the impression. Then might be seen crowds besetting the church-doors, filling it to suffocation, climbing on the leads, hanging on the rails of the organ-loft, while the steam, from their breath, fell from the pillars, like drops of rain. He resolved to depart, as a Missionary, to Georgia; when he announced his purpose, and bade the people

farewell, all, high and low, burst into tears. The same effects followed him to London. With marvellous energy, the lad of twenty-two officiated in the Tower chapel, on Sundays; every evening at Wapping, every Tuesday in the prison of Ludgate; overwhelmed with requests for charity sermons, and obtaining everywhere enormous collections. On his second visit to London, he preached on Wednesday evenings in Bow Church, and administered the sacrament, in one of the city churches, at an early hour on the Sunday morning. He preached often ten times in a week, on one day four times.* Then might be seen, long before day-light, streets filled with people, going to church with lanterns in their hands, conversing on religion; while the crowd and solemnity at the communion attested the power of his ministry. When Whitefield gave his farewell at St. Dunstan's, in a church crowded to excess, the audience melted into tears, while sobs and groans attested the hold which the stripling had obtained over the hearts of the London citizens. His own sincerity was proved, by his tearing himself from a popularity so intoxicating, in order to take the rough hard work of a Missionary. He went to America in December 1737, and returned at the end of 1738, leaving behind him impressions in America as general and deep, as he had produced in England. The necessity for his taking priest's orders, and the need of

* Life of Whitefield by Philips, p. 44.

collecting for the Orphan House, which he had founded in the Savannah, compelled his return. He found however material changes. The clergy, distanced by his late popularity, began to refuse him their pulpits. On the other hand, he was surrounded by groups of earnest men who valued his ministry. Seventy years before, in the reign of Charles the second, the success of the good Dr. Horneck and the earnestness of Bishop Hopkins had established meetings for mutual prayer. These had existed in the first days of the Reformed Church of England; discouraged by Elizabeth, patronized by Archbishop Abbott, after the Revolution, they were approved by some of the Bishops, and encouraged by Queen Mary; but they had gradually decayed, till, in Whitefield's time, out of forty societies within the Metropolis, three only survived. This remnant, attracted by Whitefield's preaching, and enchanted by his earnestness, drew round him, and entreated him to guide them. On the other side, the crowds who were disappointed of their hope of hearing him, when the church was refused, collected to listen to him in the Church-yard. This suggested to him the idea of preaching in the open air. He began this practice in 1739, in Islington church-yard. He followed it up on a larger scale in Moorfields, to an enormous multitude on Kennington common, and on Blackheath, where a rising ground is still known as Whitefield's mount. His popularity was curiously attested. At Blackheath he

had been used to address multitudes varying in number from ten to twenty thousand. One night a sermon was announced, but the report spread that Whitefield was dead. The heath was deserted. The next night, when it was known he was alive, the heath swarmed. He used to preach in Marylebone fields, then unoccupied by houses, and at Stoke Newington. He revisited Bristol, where the old enthusiasm was revived in his favor: but there, excluded from churches which, one by one, closed their doors against him, he betook himself to the fields: and the colliers of Kingswood, so rude that no one dared approach them, saw this youth rise on a hill, to address them, and heard in silence the strange tidings of Divine mercy. The trees hung with swarthy hearers, the banks were full; horses, carts, and coaches brought their loads; and, under the spell of the speaker, rich and poor, packed close together, stood entranced, and tears ran down gentle cheeks and channelled the black faces of the savage colliers.

Whitefield "had many natural advantages.* He "was something above the middle stature, well proportioned, though at that time slender, and remarkable "for a native gracefulness of manner. His complexion "was very fair, his features regular, his eyes small and "lively, of a dark blue color, and, on recovering from "the measles, he had contracted a squint with one of "them; but the peculiarity rather rendered the expres-

* Southey's Life of Wesley, Vol. i. p. 150.

“ sion of his countenance more remarkable, than in any
“ degree lessened the effect of its uncommon sweetness.
“ His voice excelled both in melody and compass, and
“ its fine modulations were happily accompanied by
“ that grace of action which he possessed in an unusual
“ degree. An ignorant man described his eloquence,
“ boldly but strikingly, when he said that Mr. White-
“ field preached like a lion. So strange a comparison
“ conveyed no unapt notion of the force and vehemence
“ and passion of that oratory which aroused the hearers
“ and made them tremble like Felix before the Apostle.

“ Yet in all his discourses there was a fervent and
“ melting charity, an earnestness of persuasion, an
“ outpouring of redundant love, partaking the virtue of
“ that faith from which it flowed, inasmuch as it served
“ to enter the heart when it pierced, and to heal it
“ as with a balm.”

With these powers, Whitefield displayed an activity almost unequalled. He hurried through England with his eager appeals, careless where he preached, so that he could gain access to men.

At Gloucester he preached in the Boothall, at Cheltenham on the Bowling-green, near Northampton on the common, from the starting-post of the races. But now all the authorities, both of Church and State, were on his heels. From Oxford the Vice-Chancellor expelled him, at Tewksbury the town-bailiff pursued him, at Basingstoke the mayor; constables and magis-

trates, players and masters of booths united to drive away this pestilent intruder. Nay, when his disciples were seized as madmen, and shut up, as happened to one, in a lunatic asylum, Whitefield, hastening to the rescue, nearly suffered the same fate, as the grave doctors, hearing him quote Scripture, pronounced him incurably mad.

Virtually and without any formal act, he was an out-cast from his Church. He had taken his name off the books of the University, and he was driven from the churches by the common consent of the clergy. He was attracted therefore to those, who were journeying in the same course, though they started yet more irregularly than himself.

At this time, Wales attracted his notice. It had been preserved from absolute barbarism, by the efforts of four of its clergy. One of these, in the reigns of James and Charles the First, had been eminent for preaching. Another, Vicar Pritchard, at the same period, had written sacred poems full of simplicity and Scripture, which had spread widely, among a people fond of music, the knowledge of truth. The third, Griffith Jones, who laboured from 1731 to 1761, had applied the yet more effectual instrument of circulating schools; teachers, prepared by him, went from parish to parish, taught the peasantry to read the Welsh Scriptures, and to learn psalmody; and enforced on them, by

a simple process of catechizing, the truths which Scripture contained. The fourth, who produced a strong impression, and whose course attracted the sympathies of Whitefield, was Howel Harris. Intended for the Church, he had become impatient of the vices and restraints of the University, and had plunged, at the age of twenty-one, into the work of a missionary. Visiting the cottages of the Welsh peasants, addressing them in the fields, he aroused them to religion and formed them into religious societies. For four years he had prosecuted his labours, when Whitefield, made aware of his history, entered Wales to encourage and assist him. In the town-hall of Cardiff, on the horse-block of the inn-yard, under the spreading trees of Pontypool, Whitefield preached to wondering crowds; while Harris, standing by his side, interpreted his discourse in Welsh to the more ignorant of the audience.

It was not the design of either to withdraw their hearers from the Church. Whitefield's appeal to the Bishop of Bangor is a proof of this. We cannot however wonder at the result. Dissent, which, after the decline of the Nonconformists in the beginning of the eighteenth century, had all but disappeared from Wales, rose again vigorously. Thirty-five chapels, languishing throughout Wales, attested in 1715, the weakness of Dissent; 954 in 1810, proved its progress; and now the number exceeds 1400.

But not to England or Wales could the ardour of

Whitefield be confined. I have mentioned his visit as a missionary to the new colony of Georgia. His presence was still more needed among the old Puritan states of the north. They had sunk, though nurtured by the austere discipline of Puritanism, into a degeneracy as deep as had overtaken, in the parent country, the Church from which they had separated. If the Church of England had lapsed into weakness, the Puritan Churches of America had fallen, by the confession of their own divines,* into a yet more general decline. Nor, till Edwards attempted to effect the revival at Northampton, did anything seem to arrest the declension. On Whitefield's first visit to America, he went to New England, and preached in New York and Boston. He rekindled the interest at Northampton, and visited other places. In 1749, anxious to provide for the Orphan Home in Georgia, he again crossed the Atlantic; and, after organizing his schemes of charity in the Savannah, he traversed the southern states,—swept, like a tornado, across Philadelphia,—and preached in New York and Boston.


The progress of no conqueror was ever greeted with greater felicitations; men, on horseback, poured forth to meet him, and conducted him in triumph into their cities. The governor received him at his table, took him in his state carriage to the boat, and bade him farewell with

* See the statements of Mr. Prince, Governor Stoughton, Mr. Torrey, Willard and Mather. Phillips' Life, p. 146, 147.

embraces ; old ministers welcomed him to their pulpits ; the chapels and churches were too confined for his auditors, who followed him in thousands to the fields ; theatres and concert-rooms were closed during his stay ; and money for his Orphan Home was poured into his hands. In vain did some of the ministers refuse him their pulpits ; the people forced the doors, and bore him into the church—others followed him to the fields ; and day-break and nightfall beheld crowds hanging on his words. The impressions produced on the hearers were everywhere the same,—interest, anxiety, emotion, arrested and held them : at times convulsed by agitation, at other times dissolved in tears, sitting often motionless under the spell of the orator : but never was his power more attested, nor by a sign more touching, than, when in Boston, a boy, one of his hearers, taken ill soon after the sermon, died, with the words on his lips, “I want to go to Mr. Whitefield’s God.” Tokens of respect and affection greeted him everywhere. Some towns built enormous chapels to receive him. At Philadelphia they offered him £800 a-year, if he would only spend six months of the year with them. One governor followed him from place to place, in his carriage. Another, aged and comforted, wept before him like a child. Hardened infidels crept in secret to hear him,—went doubting, and returned convinced. Physical power, marvellous beyond example, kept pace with this fiery energy ; a tour in America of eight hun-

dred miles, during which he traversed the worst roads, and paths dangerous from their condition, left him at leisure, within two months and a half, to preach 175 public sermons, besides holding numberless private exhortations and conversations.

These labours completed, he returned to England, and after a short stay, passed onward to Scotland. In Edinburgh he was welcomed by the ministers of the Established Church to their pulpits. For weeks he preached twice or thrice daily; on one day, seven times. In hospitals, in the Orphan-house park, on the picturesque and then unoccupied heights of the Calton hill; to the wise and the simple; to the sick and the strong; to the aged and the child. On all, his eloquence wrought the same effects, and fell with equal power. Aged men have recorded, in our lives, the scenes which they remember. Every morning, crowds gathered at his house, awakened by the sermons of the day before; every evening, when he was not preaching, he expounded Scripture in private to anxious enquirers. All the boldness of his doctrine,—all the prejudice, felt by a Presbyterian people against an Episcopalian minister, melted away before him; and hardy Scotchmen owned his influence as readily as his southern countrymen. One hundred ministers of the Scotch Church attended his sermons on one visit; and thirty, with the Lord Commissioner in the chair, welcomed him to a public dinner.




Ireland did not escape the contagion. In Cork, full of Romish bigotry, thousands of Roman Catholics crowded to hear him, and offered, if he would only remain with them, to abandon their priests. The authorities of his own Church admired him. The Primate welcomed him to his table. The Bishop of Derry treated him with kindness; the Bishop of Limerick received him in his house, and threw open the Cathedral to his preaching.

It was vain indeed, for any religious body, to try to draw him into their views, or to narrow, within the circle of a party, the influence of that genial spirit. This the seceders found; and by this the worthy Erskines were scandalized. They, good men, presented to him the defects of the State Church, its Erastianism and other sins. They pressed upon him their free Church, as the model of what was good. He, indifferent to forms, careless of order, swept, like a meteor, across the sky, lighting up one sphere, bursting into another, and passing on, burning with heavenly ardour, to traverse, with utter unconcern, the rules and limits of sects. Try to hold him in party bonds,—chain him to Presbyterian covenants! he burst them, as the horse in the desert snaps the cords, or as the eagle, perched on his mountain eyrie, looks down and loathes the aviary below.

CHAPTER II.

WHITEFIELD—THE SOURCES OF HIS INFLUENCE.

THIS seems the moment when we should examine the secret of Whitefield's success. Ingenious writers, in tracing the progress of Methodism, have marvelled at the effects which attended his ministry. They read his sermons, take up passages which his admirers have preserved, and find no evidence of intellectual power. But the fact of his success is indubitable. The man who, by his preaching, could produce in all parts of England, Scotland, Ireland, and America, the emotions which I have described, was no common orator. We might as well question the eloquence of some of the great orators of ancient or modern times. It is not upon the speeches of these men (great as a few of these are) that their fame rests, but on history and tradition. The first Pitt has left almost as few traces of his eloquence, as Whitefield. The speeches, which remain of his, are not remarkable. There are twenty second-rate speakers, now in Parliament, whose speeches




read better than those of Chatham. And yet these gentlemen send their audience to sleep : while Pitt held the House of Commons in his hand, during a period of twenty years, and ruled them with a mastery as absolute, as a teacher rules his pupils. This living power is the true test of eloquence, and this test may be applied in the case of Whitefield, and is all in his favour.

We must however remember the foundation on which the power of an orator is built. Demosthenes, after an experience of success more remarkable than any man, said that *manner* was the secret of oratorical strength. His rival, paying to him his famous tribute, has given us the same testimony. In our own day, every one may cite passages of Dr. Chalmers' Sermons, which do not bear the analysis of the critic ; yet none of us ever heard a sermon delivered by him, which did not carry the audience along with it with a force, irresistible as that of a torrent. Wherein lay this force ? To some extent, of course, in the thoughts and words employed : but let an ordinary man read or deliver one of these famous sermons to an audience, and we predict, that the result will be a failure. The force of eloquence is in the eye, the look, the gesture, and the voice, as much as in the words. No man therefore can judge of a speech, unless he has heard it. You might as well judge, through a newspaper report, of the power of a singer. The vocalist and the orator address the senses ; through these, they master the mind. Shut

out the senses, the instrument is broken. Often the best speeches read badly, while a dull discourse appears good in print. To us now, the speeches of Dr. Dui-genan appear better than those of Grattan, and the words of Pelham seem as weighty as those of Pitt ; but the flashing eye, the kindling look, the swelling voice, the varied tone, the impassioned gesture, these are gone, and these were the instruments and symbols of the orator's power.

Now these belonged to Whitefield, as perhaps they belonged to no other man. He was by nature an orator. His voice was extraordinary in its compass, and of singular flexibility. He could pass, without an effort, from notes, which would fill an area occupied by twenty thousand persons, to tones, soft and plaintive as the whispers of a child. While a boy, the music of his voice, and the beauty of his gesture were remarked by his master. When he became a lad, the bent of his genius led to his practising for the pulpit. When he was a stripling of twenty, his first sermon, delivered in the town where he was known and despised, bowed the heart of his audience, as by a charm. From that moment, every effort was a triumph. It did not matter what audience he addressed ; the rabble of Marylebone, the colliers of Kingswood, the learned men of Edinburgh, the merchants of New York, the sceptics of Boston ; all yielded themselves to his influence. The fire of the Celt, and the coolness of the Scotchman



were alike subdued by him. Hume, Franklin, Bolingbroke, Hervey and Romaine, Chesterfield and Pulteney, the courtier and the fop, countesses and footmen, owned his power. The peasants of the mountain, the mechanics of the town, the colliers from the mine, the coterie of the boudoir, the master and the servant girl, the wit, and the negro, all hung upon his lips. He could make them for the time, what he wished, sad or happy, penitent or joyful, hopeful or despairing: no flight of oratory was too bold for him, no repetition of a sermon weakened its power. Men heard the same words and saw the same gestures, again and again, and still went away impressed and delighted.

What was the secret of this power? It is worth an enquiry. Certainly it was no stage trick, no skill of acting. The cambric handkerchief, the simulated tears—the tawdry sentiment—the laboured gesture, were not his weapons—these only excite contempt.

Two things are indispensable for the orator, a good subject, and a strong conviction. If a man is deficient in either of these, he fails. He may have the grace of Chesterfield, or the silver voice of Bolingbroke, he will not keep hold of his audience. But, where these two things are united, a man has the foundation of success. Then every advantage, natural and acquired, tells.


Nay, where there are great natural defects, success may be attained. A bad voice, a faulty accent, wiry tones, ungainly action, will not paralyze the orator. He

may force his way over these faults. Such cases, many may remember in Parliament. Such examples we have had from the pulpit. Yet more—a man's thoughts may be feeble, and his words few, yet the grandeur of his theme and the earnestness of his thoughts will give him sway over his audience. The weakness of his mind or manner are made up by the dignity of the subject, and the intensity of his feelings. But when, on a good foundation, good materials are laid—when the speaker adds voice, manners, thoughts, words, to a great subject, of which his heart is full, the effect is incalculable. It is thus that we learn the true power of eloquence.

In reading, one man will read the Liturgy, so as to send us to sleep; another will thrill a congregation with emotion. One man reads Shakspeare so that we have to run out of the room; another makes us tremble and weep.*

But if the difference caused, by the mere reading of other men's thoughts, is so great, how vastly is this increased, when we have to deliver our own. On this

* I wish this were attended-to by young men designing to enter the church. It is intolerable to find so many, whose reading is bad. What would be said of them, if they could not spell? Better that, than drawl or clip their words, so as to destroy them. What is the use of truth in such hands? It would be idle to argue seriously on the propriety of intoning our services. The fashion is utterly undeserving of an argument. Intoning in an enormous cathedral an unintelligible service, as the Church of Rome does, is reasonable: in our cathedrals, it is unavoidable, from their size. To debase our Liturgy into the drawl of a nasal whine, is an abuse which needs no exposure.



point there is a distinction to be noticed. Men may deliver their thoughts in one of two ways. They may think at home, and then read or repeat them to an audience. Or they may work out their thoughts, as they speak, before the hearers. There is a far higher interest in the latter process, provided the work be well done. It lets us into the mysteries of thought; it lays open the processes and powers of the mind, and electrifies us with the lightning of the faculties. We sympathize intensely with the difficulties of the speaker, and exult in his triumphs. But great hazards attend this effort;—the peril of a feeble fluency is always lying in wait for the speaker; and if men are led into this, and lapse into a weak slip-slop garrulity, it nauseates the audience.

There is the opposite risk of hesitation and a nervous embarrassment. The mind, oppressed with the weight of its efforts, and the sight of the audience, is unable to act; it becomes weak; a dull broken expression of thought ensues—the hearer anticipates and abandons the speaker, and all sympathy between them is lost. This is a painful spectacle. The mind of the speaker is like a prisoner working in chains on the highway—and we look on this degradation with pain.

Speakers at times avoid this evil by another. They get their speech by heart, and unite, as they imagine, the force of elaborate thought, and extemporary impression. But once let the audience detect the truth, (and

detect it they always do,) they are offended. They feel it to be a sham. It professes to be what it is not. But it injures the speaker, as much as it annoys the audience. Not one man in a thousand can deliver, with genuine emotion, the speech which he has committed to memory. He is thinking of his task, not of his topic—he is recalling a string of words, where he should be dealing with human feelings. He becomes formal, cold, and ineffective. A bad effect is often produced by speakers, who, when delivering really extemporaneous speeches, do it as coolly as if they were sitting in their arm-chair at home. This might seem the perfection of oratory, but it fails, and it must always fail. For, if a man is cool, because he is cold; because he takes no interest in his audience, or has undue confidence in himself, his command of intellect will not produce emotion. He may say what is true, and say it well, but, if he speaks as if he did not feel, he will fail. We cannot move the heart, but through the heart. The power of the true orator is never seen, until he adds his own heartfelt emotion to strong intellectual power.

CHAPTER III.

WHITEFIELD'S ORATORY.

THE qualifications which I have presumed to describe, as belonging to oratory, were, in Whitefield, singularly combined. He had all natural gifts,—a fine voice, of great compass, rare flexibility, wide range of tones, and under perfect command. His action was admirable; natural, because gained by the instinct of genius, and improved by observation. His mind wrought intensely, yet had the use of all its powers; and this, not because he was unimpassioned, but because his soul, possessed with his subject, had no room for the littleness of self. His audiences could not but be moved by a speaker, who was himself full of emotion. He spoke without nervousness, because he had a deep sympathy with his audience. *He* could not think of their opinion of himself, who was trembling under an intense anxiety for them. Nor could he stop to be depressed by nervous fear, who was hurrying to snatch others from an appalling doom.

If he spoke of the future, he spoke of it as one who saw it. If he would rouse fear, the danger rose before him in a bodily shape, as if it were a monster, to be seen. If he would awaken hope, he spoke, with the ecstasy of one who described a happiness which he enjoyed.

No man ever mounted the pulpit, with a more awful sense of the presence of God; none ever addressed his audience with a more intense sympathy with man. His prayers were the outpourings of a heart versed in religious communion. His addresses were the bursts of a yearning affection. He preached because he could not restrain himself. When winter came to arrest his wanderings, he mourned, like a man bereaved. When spring returned, to release him, he started, like a prisoner let loose from his cell. His friendship was so warm, that Wesley said of him—"There never was a more generous friend." His benevolence was so large, that it swept every outcast into his embrace. There was not a beggar, whom he ever met, that did not find in him a friend. For orphans,* he wrought, while life lasted, to make and keep for them a sheltering home. His tenderness of heart was so great, that he could not bear to part from his friends; days of separation he called days of execution,† and shrunk from them as tortures.

His sermons, such remnants of them as we have, betray the character of the man. There is nothing in

* Life, pp. 381—383.

† Life, 457, 469, 498.

them of ornament or fine words,—nothing to shew his fancy or learning: they are simple, unadorned, and plain: the short, clear words of a man, who sees a danger and would save us from it. In a fire, or in a shipwreck, men speak shortly, plainly, and earnestly. They have no time for figures of speech; they take the simplest words to convey their meaning. This was Whitefield's habit, and this, with his deep emotion, was the source of his power.

But he *painted* vividly in words what he had in his mind. There was no shortcoming there. His pictures were bold and clear; he drew them in such strong, perhaps we might say, such coarse colors, as men use who paint on the wayside to arrest the careless passenger.*

But this sort of preaching, accompanied with this emotion and delivery, no man could withstand. It did not matter how callous the audience was, or how cold, none remained unmoved. The illiterate lad saw the sufferings of Christ painted by Whitefield in such colors, that he was struck to the heart. The ruffian carpenters, who came to stone the preacher, melted under his appeals. Franklin, who made up his mind not to be cajoled out of his money, gave way, and emptied his purse. A youth came to listen to Whitefield, as to an actor, that in later years he might recal and describe his manner; but Whitefield's words so

* Life, p. 302.

overwhelmed him, that he burst into floods of tears, and, for weeks, could not drive from his memory the thoughts which were thus suddenly fastened on his heart.

In Moorfields, on one occasion, after preaching to a large audience, 350 letters were received by him, from as many persons, aroused by this one sermon.

Near Boston, twenty ministers traced to Whitefield the change in their religious characters. At Exeter, a man came, prepared to hurl a large stone at him; interested by the sermon, he let the stone drop; "Sir," he said to Whitefield, "I came to break your head, but God has given me a broken heart."

These are specimens, taken at random, in order to represent impressions, made every where—on all ranks, and all characters—by this master of eloquence. Eighteen thousand sermons, preached in England, Scotland, Ireland, and America,—three and four in a day,—at midnight, before day-dawn,—in fields, streets, commons, hill-sides, churches, chapels, and halls; not one of these passed without raising some emotion, and leaving a transient or a lasting trace on one or many minds.

This was the history of Whitefield's oratory, and it is a history without parallel. But we must always bear in mind, that his sphere was that of the orator. He was not the law-giver or organizer; he had no taste for arranging systems and founding sects; he had no mind

for this work ; his task was to break the sodden heart, and tear, as by a harrow, the callous feelings.

Having done this, he passed on to other auditors, to engage in the same labor. He indeed repeated his visits to the same place, which he called cross-ploughing the field ; but this he did, in order to deepen impressions, not to collect a party. To all solicitations to organize a church, he turned a deaf ear. "I hate to head a party. It is absolutely inconsistent with my other business, to take upon me the care of Societies." When his friends at Leeds wished to separate from Wesley, and set up for themselves under Whitefield's name, he wrote to prevent the breach, and condemned their conduct in emphatic terms : "Oh, this self-love—this self-will is the devil of devils." In Scotland, the Associate Presbytery met to receive him. They were about to appoint a Moderator, and proceed to business : "I asked them for what purpose? They answered, to set me right about the matter of Church Government, &c. I replied, they might save themselves that trouble, for I had no scruples about it ; that, settling church government and preaching about the solemn League and Covenant, was not my plan. I was more and more determined to go out into the highways and hedges,—and, if the Pope himself would lend me his pulpit, I would gladly proclaim the righteousness of Christ therein." His catholic spirit bounded over the

inclosures which fence meaner minds, and his comprehensive love swept humanity into its embrace.

This indeed made his party small, and his reputation short; his fame has faded before that of Wesley, but he was indifferent to this in his life-time, and we need not regret it now. His life was given to individual suasion, which produced effects, not to be measured by figures. For the mission of Whitefield was as practical as that of Wesley, and, in its way, as effective.

Whitefield's labours began at Gloucester, in June 1736, when he was a lad of twenty-two, and were closed in America in September 1770, when he sunk exhausted, at the age of fifty-six, after a ministry of thirty-four years. During this period he had six times visited America, six times traversed Wales, thrice Ireland, and eight times the south of Scotland. This, his outfield work, he termed ranging. To enjoy his wilderness range, to mount his field-throne, was his delight. "Ceiled houses and crowded tables I leave to others; a morsel of bread and of cold meat, in a wood, is my luxurious repast." He was sad when winter came to stop his journeys—journeys, of sixty miles a day, made on horseback. On one occasion he preached forty sermons in three weeks in America, travelling four hundred miles, and he preached twenty sermons in a fortnight, travelling three hundred miles. In England, he preached, on one occasion, one hundred and eighty sermons in three weeks, travelling twelve hundred miles. In

Edinburgh and Cambridgeshire, he preached four times a day. For twenty eight days, he preached daily to audiences of ten thousand, clustered on the Calton Hill, or under the Salisbury Crags. In Cambuslang, under a fragrant thorn, he preached during great part of the day, resumed his preaching at nine at night, and continued, till two o'clock in the morning, to address weeping multitudes. When, reduced by illness in 1770, he was driven to relax, his stint (which he thought narrow) was two sermons on Sunday, and three in the week ; and his sick regimen, in 1757, was one sermon daily, and three sermons on Sunday.

The violent attacks made on him, show something of the spirit of his age, but more of his power. No wonder that the mountebanks of Moorfields, and the frequenters of the race-courses tried to put him down, and threw dirt, stones, and dead cats at him. They saw that he was putting them down. He had to bear a stormy ordeal. In Gloucestershire they used horns and bells to drown his voice. In Devonshire they turned loose on him a bull and dogs. In other places stones, mud, and yells were hurled at him. In Plymouth, a set of ruffians made a vow to put him to death. In London, in Long Acre, they beset his chapel, smashed the windows, and raised a high scaffold on which they placed a copper boiler, and, thundering on this, they added to the music the din of drums, bells, clappers and cleavers. The players, finding the theatres

thinned, were furious, and took to mimicking the preacher. Drury Lane rung to the laughter created by coarse jests in the Minor of Foote, and the Hypocrite of Isaac Bickerstaff. "All hail such contempt!" was his only remark.

Yet the orator's triumphs were as marked as his sufferings. He silenced the yells of Hackney and the catcalls of Moorfields, and, round his quivering pulpit groups of young children, who turned up their weeping eyes as stones, eggs, or dirt struck the preacher, attested, by their tearful interest, the triumphs of his eloquence.

Nor could age abate his power. He addressed as eager audiences, when, subdued by illness, he embarked for the last time at Gravesend, as when he mounted, with youthful steps, the pulpit at Gloucester. The crowds that gathered to hear him, on his visit, four years before his death, at Bath, were as large as those which greeted his second progress to Bristol. The multitudes, who flocked to him at New York on his last journey; the poor who crammed the chapels, the rich whose carriages blocked the street, and who, unsatiated, returned to his lodging to hear more; the men of Boston, who gathered, morning after morning, deserting their business, four thousand at a time, to hang on his lips; who wept (the highest tribute) silent tears; the citizens, who conjured him not to leave them, "For Christ's sake, stay and preach the Gospel to us;" the cities, which poured upon him such countless invita-

tions, that he sent a bundle of these, his strange legacy, to England, these were the latest specimens of that marvellous ministry. With these in his hand, in the height of his fame he fell, as a minstrel would like to fall, hand and skill unimpaired, the instrument, which had long discoursed sweet strange music, still vibrating to the touch of the master hand.

"Sinners awakened, saints quickened, enemies made at peace with me." The Governor, council, and assembly of Georgia attended to hear him preach, and voted him the thanks of the province. But there was a more grateful reward. "O Bethesda," he says to the Orphan Home which his untiring energy had secured, "O Bethesda, my Bethel, never did I taste such domestic peace and comfort and joy; my happiness is inconceivable."

But his spirit, strung to its work, could not endure even that grateful rest. "No resting on this side eternity. When thou seest me resting, in tender pity put a thorn in my nest, to prevent me from it. Give me, Lord, a pilgrim heart, for my pilgrim life." "Every thing, I meet with, seems bearing this voice with it. Go thou, and preach the Gospel; be a pilgrim on earth."

And thus he continued to the end. His last journey was a ride, of fifteen miles, from Portsmouth to Exeter in America. He went there to preach. "Sir," said his anxious friend, "you are more fit to go to bed, than to preach." "True, Sir," but turning aside and look-

ing up, he clasped his hands together, "Lord Jesus, I am weary in thy work, but not of thy work. If I have not yet finished my course, let me go and speak for Thee, once more in the fields, seal thy truth, and come home and die."

His last prayer was granted. Once more the heath swarmed with thousands, and the well-known voice penetrated their hearts. Then the silver trumpet was broken. A short ride brought him, in the evening of the 29th of September 1770, to his journey's end. Wearied and weak, he went to bed. He awoke early, with a pang of pain, endured two hours of suffering, and, at day dawn, his spirit departed.

In this short life he had completed a great work. How great, human words do not convey to us. From its very nature its traces are indistinct.

His thoughts were written, not in books, but on the hearts of the men whom he influenced, and the traces of his work have therefore disappeared, with the generation affected by it; passing from earth and its shadows, into the world of realities.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PREACHER, AND HIS POWER.

IT now appears that many students in Scotland, and many ministers in America were impressed by the preaching of Whitefield. Among the English clergy who owed to him their religious convictions, was Hervey.* He exercised much influence on the more cultivated classes of this country, during the last century, and he has thus spoken of Whitefield:—"I never beheld so fair a copy of our Lord: such a living image of the Saviour; such exalted delight in God; such unbounded benevolence to man; such steady faith in the divine promises; such fervent zeal for the divine glory—and all this without the least moroseness of humour, or extravagance of behaviour, but sweetened with the most engaging cheerfulness of temper, and regulated by all the sobriety of reason and wisdom of Scripture."

What deserves especially to be remarked is, that the

* Life, p. 348.

influence of Whitefield was all personal. His work, wide as the range of the English language, and affecting all who spoke it, was accomplished by the agency of his own powers, and by the instrument of his own voice. The chiefs of a sect, or the leaders of a party are powerfully aided by their followers. Wesley had his societies and preachers. Fox his sect. The Erskines the church of the Secession. The Puritans, the hearts of the oppressed. In later days O'Connell had a great following—bound to him by interest. The Free Church of Scotland have a large party. Whitefield laboured alone. Wherever he went, he went as a preacher, and, his preaching once over, he departed. It was contrary to all precedent, that the impressions of such a movement should be lasting: yet they were deep and permanent. The glow of his genius kindled hearts heavy with sorrow—and he went on, warming and cheering thousands, from the time that the luminary rose above the horizon in England, till it sunk, in unclouded brilliancy into the Atlantic waves.

Effects so remarkable must have been caused by singular qualities; vulgar thoughts, poor sentiments, common-place words, could not have made this impression. Hume said, it was worth going twenty miles, to hear a sermon of Whitefield. Franklin reported, that he could hear him preach a dozen times the same sermon with fresh delight; Chesterfield listened to him with pleasure; Bolingbroke admired him, and the great Parlia-

mentary leader Pulteney, himself a man of eloquence, delighted in Whitefield. In truth, Whitefield's words were weighty, and his thoughts were expressed in happy terms. Some phrases, now often used, have dropped from the words of his last night, preserved because they were his last. How many fell from him of which no record was kept. He had no biographer, and he travelled without a companion.* It is true that, from a man, intent on one topic, we do not look for variety, nor in a person always engaged, can we expect research. It may be readily confessed, that he had not the learning of Wesley. Lifted into the pulpit, at the unripe age of twenty-two, standing there in a whirl of excitement through a mission which lasted more than thirty years, engaged constantly in speaking and conversing, we cannot look for stores of knowledge, or lines of original thought. All the more extraordinary, if his resources were scanty, was the effect of his unadorned eloquence.

The man whom a hundred hard-headed ministers in Edinburgh united to honour, and ministers of all denominations in America, and Toplady, and Grimshaw, and Berridge, and Romaine, who, within the Church of England wrote and wrought, in their day, with power ; he, who drew to his preaching gentle and simple, the negro, collier, mechanic and orphan ; the wife of Chesterfield, Lord and Lady Sunderland, Lord Dartmouth, Lord Leven, Lady Huntingdon, and Lady Glenorchy,

* Phillip's Life, pp. 386, 387, 397, 378.

had something to say which it was worth men's while to hear.*

We can trace even now the force of his appeals. His anxiety to reclaim the vicious ; his overpowering earnestness, his affections, the intenseness of his sympathy ; we can understand how a disinterestedness so singular as his, must have attracted men, and prepared them to feel the warmth of his appeals. We can comprehend how a man, of impassible temperament, alive to emotion, and excited by it, should have been wrought, in preaching, to such interest as to vent his feelings in tears. I am aware that Whitefield's tears, shed in the pulpit, and always, as it seemed, at command, have been remarked upon, as signs of bad taste and theatrical display. We should make allowance for the susceptibility of his nature, and the manner in which his constitution was acted upon by emotions which, reflected in the looks of his audience, reacted on himself. We must wait for an orator as earnest and effective as Whitefield, before we pronounce tears out of keeping. It is evident that they seemed natural to his audience, and this included the most critical men of his day. What seemed appropriate to Franklin, and Chesterfield, and Hume, we should be slow to condemn.

But objections are made to the homeliness of Whitefield's words. We doubt the justice of this criticism.

* See Phillip's Life, pp. 499, 415, 500, 83, 458, 466, 504, 105, 177, 248, 367, 384.

Those, who use pithy sayings, like Rowland Hill, and break with these the course of their oratory, mixing humour with pathos, leave strong impressions on their hearers. Of all tedious things, the most tedious is the weary monotony of a stilted style. This is supposed to be the special style of the pulpit. Nothing can be more incorrect. Bad everywhere, it is there intolerable. It is hard enough to make men feel deeply on subjects which are removed from common interest. But if a preacher tries to affect his audience, from the high stilts of pompous declamation, we may predict the consequences. He may fancy that his audience admire him ; they do not think of him at all. They are shipbuilding, or money-making, or farming, or dreaming. If any thoughts remain for him, the hearers are looking up, from time to time, to wonder when the tall orator will descend from his perch to their level, to tell them in plain words what he means.

Whitefield knew well that this pompous declamation would not avail him ; he never used it ; he spoke in the words of life ; no child could misunderstand him ; he felt that plain speaking was indispensable. But he also knew that there was another mode of conveying impressions to his audiences, as powerful as words. He saw that it was folly to try to move men by a well-read essay. The orator must speak to the eye as well as the ear—by look and gesture, as well as by words. Whitefield therefore studied action, valued it, and practised

it ; not indeed on the stage, or the rehearsal, but in the chapel and the field ; his school was that of practice, and, through this, he corrected and developed the instincts of nature. He watched the effects of his delivery and learned how to make it perfect. Each time that he delivered a sermon, he gave it new point by better action ; hence men were delighted, not vexed, by the repetition ; they liked it, as one likes better an exquisite piece of music, the oftener you hear it, or the representation of a finished actor.

Nor was Whitefield deterred from his mode of delivery by the taunts and grimaces of his time ; he knew that, if action * assisted the efforts of statesmen or actors, it was even more required for the pulpit. If it was of service in giving force to the power of Parliamentary eloquence on an arena of interest, much more was it needed to rouse a drowsy audience in a church. Whitefield saw that it was not wise to throw away, when entering on the hardest task assigned to an orator, the most effective weapon from the armoury of per-

* The value which Demosthenes set on action is well known. Take another illustration,—The Rev. Thomas Jones (Memoirs, p. 7,) says, when speaking of the commencement of his religious impressions, derived from Rowlands, the Whitefield of Wales, “ I used to go to Church, stay there during the service, and return home without taking notice of what was said. It was the *remarkable manner of Rowlands* that drew my attention.”

The effect of Dr. Chalmers' manner, as all who have heard him, will testify, was immense, in spite of its faults. So also was Sheil's in Parliament ; and, I imagine, also Mr. Canning's.


suasive power. These are practical lessons to be drawn from his experience, and it is well not to lose sight of them.

I admit that he had powers given him for his peculiar ministry which are rarely found combined ; and that he lived in an age, when, from the long abandonment of preaching, its effect was novel and extraordinary. His own powers were indeed peculiar. To address, in the open air, audiences of ten and twenty thousand persons,—to make the voice reach the outskirts of this multitude,—to do this often, and still to endure ; to preach twice and thrice a day, week by week, and for thirty-four years, with unabated faculties, is not given to ordinary men. The marvellous voice, the tones like an organ, the enduring frame and buoyant temperament were unusual gifts. But many of Whitefield's attractions did not arise from these ; his habits of order gave him command of all that he knew ; his activity was always adding to his stores, and inducing him to use them ; his intense philanthropy filled him with sympathy for others. The animated countenance, eager eye, and commanding air, the reverential gaze, the look fixed on his audience, the eyes filled with tears, the nerves quivering and voice trembling with emotion, the expression changing with the feelings, which drifted, like clouds, across the face, the gesture rapid and appropriate, these were results of moral

earnestness, and of long experience. These things should be noticed, because they may be imitated.

But while I speak of the qualities of Whitefield, I have no wish to disguise his defects. He was not a man of learning, nor a scholar, nor a man of research, or of acute remark, nor of sustained thought; he made no pretence to these things, and had no time to acquire them. He was always in harness, always the preacher; and even in this, he had faults,—some coarseness, some unbecoming jests, some tincture of vulgarity,—faults which arose, partly from his birth, partly from imperfect training; for he sprung from the lowest of the people, and his education was interrupted. These defects marked his course, not always favourably; yet that course was remarkable, all the more for the signal defects which he overcame. We have, I think, cause to boast, not of the man only, but of English institutions, when we find that from the lowest ranks of our people, without friends or patrons, by unaided effort, Whitefield rose, in spite of many disadvantages, to the height of an eminent fame.

At the same time I do not forget, that his fame was that of the orator, not that of the head of a party, or the founder of a sect. We should not however, grudge him our tribute, nor undervalue his service. The fate of the orator is a hard one, and his recompense is small. He often does a great work, and leaves, on his age, a lasting impression. He gives us the richest



combinations of genius, and the happiest expressions of thought; his language is, at times, copious as that of the dramatist, and his imagination graceful as that of the poet; when inspired by his subject and his audience, he throws out gleams of fancy which written fiction, in her happiest moods, hardly attains. Yet his rewards are few, and his name, partially known to the generation in which he lives, disappears with it. The traces of his power, committed to an uncertain tradition, are soon lost; or, written in the sand of men's memories, they are washed out by the tide of the next generation. He, who has touched a thousand hearts, and inspired countless actions, is rapidly forgotten. Hardly, from some accidental notice,—a passing allusion in a gossiping memoir, a note in a contemporary history, a hit in a play or a poem,—do we learn anything of the eloquence of a man, who delighted and instructed his age. His power is a spell over his audience, and is intoxicating to himself; but it lives in his breath, and dies with it. The tempestuous emotions, which he calls forth, drift across the sky like vapour; and beyond the walls, which resound to thunders of applause, he is unknown.

Nor have after ages any means of learning his merits. Herodotus, Thucydides, Homer, and Virgil delight us still. Shakespeare is still in our hands and hearts. The thoughts of Plato, Aristotle, and Bacon still im-

press us. But who, except by compulsion, reads the speeches of the orator.* Even if correctly reported, they are as dull as the report of an actor's acting or of a singer's song. The voice, the look, the gesture, cannot be recalled. Oratory is only known by those who listen to it, and the speaker, however eloquent, lives but for his hearers.

Yet his service may be great. He may guide, move, restrain or elevate his age. He may be the master spirit of his time, for evil or for good.

Demosthenes standing alone to rouse his countrymen, Cicero defeating conspiracies against the liberties of Rome, Savonarola awakening to truth the men of Florence, Wycliffe kindling against the Papacy the yeomen of England, Massillon abashing the vile courtiers of Versailles, Chatham inspiring the venal Commons of England, Chalmers warming the cold audiences of the North; these were stirring sights, and were the doings of great men. It is well to bear these in mind, when we sum up the evidences of Whitefield's power. They are as authentic as any traditions of eloquence, and more full. Not one of these celebrated orators, of ancient and modern days, spoke so often as Whitefield did, to multitudes so great and audiences so various, for such

* Burke's Speeches are not an exception, but an example. They were so full of philosophy and thought that we read them now, but, for that very reason, they failed in delivery, were shunned as a bore, and emptied the House of Commons.

a series of years, with such unquestionable power. Whether we measure the force of oratory by the numbers influenced, the impression, or the effects on conduct, no orator was his superior.

I admit that one secret of his strength lay in his character. But that truly is a part of all oratory. Whether in Parliament or in the pulpit, the character of the man is the basis of his influence. Yet it should be borne in mind that none will move an audience, as Whitefield moved them, without that skill and practice of manner of which he was a master. Nor less true is it that he only can hope for success, as a preacher, who studies in the school in which, through life, Whitefield was a learner. For it is undeniable that his deep sincerity attracted sympathy, his piety caused his fervor, and from his prayers came his powers.

After examining the facts and consulting the traditions, we are led to the conclusion, that, from the ranks of the English people, sprung a man who, through personal energy, rose to equal the great masters of eloquence. If to him the final test is applied, and it is asked, who touched most hearts, called forth most passions, guided most the men of his age by oratorical power?—bearing in mind the annals of ancient times and the records of Parliamentary debate, we shall be constrained to say, that it was the poor tapster-lad from the Bell Inn of Gloucester.

Section Third.

LIFE OF JOHN WESLEY.



CHAPTER I.

THE MISSION.

WE left JOHN WESLEY, after his return from America, engrossed with the new convictions which he had derived from the Moravians. His brother Charles embraced them earlier and was the first to teach them. But John Wesley had no sooner returned from Germany, than his ardour compelled him to preach. Churches soon became closed against him, but in London, in the meetings of his followers, in such societies as admitted him, and in the prisons, he preached. At last he addressed the multitude in the open air in Moorfields. The urgency of Whitefield, who had resumed his duties at Bristol, and was about to leave it for America, drew Wesley to Bristol in 1739. There he entered on the system of open-air preaching which he afterwards practised. He had much to overcome in his own mind and in that of others, for sermons in the open air were as strange in the days of George the Second, as they had been, when begun by George Fox, in the reigns of the

Stewarts. To such a practice the ecclesiastical authorities were opposed, and the clergy regarded it with the same aversion. Archbishop Potter, indeed, treated the Wesleys with a forbearance worthy of his character; Bishop Gibson with more sharpness. The Bishop of Bristol openly declared his hostility, and his tone was adopted by the clergy. Nor can we wonder at this excited state of opinion, when a man, so upright and affectionate as Samuel Wesley, spoke of his brother's proceedings with strong reprobation.

Substantially the Archbishop's Christian counsels were not forgotten by Wesley. He had said; "If you desire to be extensively useful, do not spend your time and strength for or against such things as are of a disputable nature, but in testifying against open notorious vice, and in promoting real essential holiness."

With this great object before him, Wesley was not of a temper to be shaken by opposition. He met attacks with unflinching resolution. Excluded from churches, he took to the fields. Driven from the sphere of a parochial ministry, he plunged into a wide itinerancy. Into that sphere both Charles and John Wesley were naturally carried by their own impulse, by the depth of their convictions, and the apathy of the times. Their respect indeed for the Church was great, and their love for its rules and order was sincere. Through life these feelings exercised over them great influence, and withheld them from many practices to which they

were urged. But their feelings yielded to their convictions. To maintain the order of the Church was their wish. To withhold from the indifferent, to refuse to the anxious, truths which had satisfied their own minds, seemed to them inhuman. At all hazards they felt bound to preach, and if authority traversed their efforts, they broke away from it.* "My business on earth," says Wesley, "is to do what good I can. Wherever I think I can do most good, there must I stay." At Bristol therefore, when Whitefield left it for his second visit to America, John Wesley began the labours which have made his name famous.

He found the practice, already established by Whitefield, of addressing multitudes, in the streets, highways, and fields. He met with thousands anxious to hear him, roused by Whitefield and asking to be taught. Into scenes of strong emotion he entered, and to masses of eager auditors he addressed his discourses. It is worth our notice that in these scenes the oratorical Whitefield was of a calmer temperament, than the acute Wesley. The eloquence of Whitefield had admitted restraints, which Wesley's energy threw aside. For the ebullition of popular feeling, which the appeals of Whitefield drew forth, had never passed the bounds of natural emotion. Tears, grief, and remorse had marked the course, and proved the power of the preacher. But there were no paroxysms, or convulsions, or screams, or


* Moore's Life, i. 465.

fainting-fits. It was only when Wesley began his ministry, that the exhibitions commenced which have brought on Methodism a just reproach. When Wesley preached, some persons cried aloud for pardon, others fell motionless to the ground ; others shook, as with an ague ; drops of sweat poured, like rain, from some ; some fell into fits ; others screamed, beat the ground and writhed in convulsions. Groans, sobs, and tumult drowned the words of the preacher, and these emotions began with his first sentence, and spread by contagion over the audience. This tumult only yielded, after a time, to words of encouragement from him. Then, some persons passed into transports of joy, others into a deep and strange repose. The truth is, Wesley's mind was in some points less equally balanced than Whitefield's. Under that cool organizing head, there glowed a red heat of enthusiasm, which burned more fiercely than the calmer glow of genius. Wesley was honestly persuaded that these emotions arose in answer to prayer, that they were signs of a Divine influence, as genuine and miraculous, as those which attested the preaching of the apostles. To question this fact seemed to him a denial of the senses. To impugn it was little less than blasphemy. The experience we have had, of the effects of mental excitement on the bodily frame, from causes purely physical, has changed and corrected these opinions.

We have learned from the cases of the Camisards of France, the Jumpers of Wales, the Mormons of

America, as well as from Mesmerism, and Animal Magnetism, that physical effects flow from the excitement of the nervous system, and that the action of the mind on the body has all the results of disease, producing fits, contortions, stupor, and collapse. The fact, that a preacher can excite these, is no sign either of his merit or his doctrine. It may prove his conviction and earnestness, as it marks the impression made on his hearers ; but it neither accredits his words, nor attests the Divine approbation. It is a purely natural result of mental and bodily causes, marking how the frame of man sympathizes with the movements of his mind.

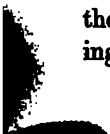
The evidence of this in the case of Methodism is abundant. Whitefield had no taste for this spasmodic excitement : under his ministry therefore hardly a case of it occurred. John Wesley regarded these things as signs of supernatural interposition—diabolic or divine. They were to be found, in the early part of his ministry, whenever he preached ; they burst out as soon as he entered the pulpit, and spread, like electricity, by contagion. Charles Wesley, who was attached to his brother, and of an imaginative temperament, at first regarded these exhibitions with interest, but he began to perceive their causes, and, when he used his influence to restrain them, they abated. The woman at Kingswood who fell into distortions, but became calm, when he rebuked her ; the girl at Bristol, who fell into a trance in order to



attract his notice ; the man who went into a fit, but recovered, when left to himself ; the sisters, who bawled lustily under the pulpit, and became still as doves when placed by him at the further end of the chapel ; these cases, honestly narrated by Charles, attest and explain the delusion. It is idle to refer to these as matters for philosophical investigation ; they are to be taken as signs of a strong popular excitement, and of an enthusiastic credulity.

But we must make allowance for a period which enjoyed less experience in these matters than ourselves, and we can explain how the effects of emotion acting on a multitude of persons, and producing extraordinary results, would seem, to an eager mind, to mark miraculous interposition. At all events the words, acts, and writings of Wesley on other subjects attest the vigor of his mind. If he was an enthusiast on this point, he made up for it by being firm and clear on all others ; the secret of his success was assuredly not the physical excitement which he produced, but the moral conviction which out-lastcd and confirmed his ministry.

We have testimony to the character of the preaching of the Wesleys, from one (Joseph Williams, of Kidderminster) himself a dissenter, brought up in that unimpassioned school, but who, animated by higher tastes, went to judge for himself of the preaching which then caused so much stir. "Never," says he, speaking of Charles Wesley's preaching, which, in those



points, resembled his brother's, "have I heard any man discover such evident signs of a vehement desire, or labor so earnestly to convince his hearers that they were all, by nature, in a sinful, lost, undone state.* He shewed how great a change faith in Christ would produce in the whole man. Nor did he fail to press how ineffectual their faith would be to justify them, unless it wrought by love, purified their hearts, and was productive of good works. And although he used no notes, nor had anything in his hand but a Bible, he delivered his thoughts in a rich and copious variety of expression, and with so much propriety, that I could not observe anything incoherent through the whole performance."

And of the evening services, he says—"Never sure, did I hear such praying; never did I see or hear such evident marks of fervency in the service of God. He prayed with uncommon fervour, fluency, and variety of proper expressions. At the close of every petition, a serious amen, like a gentle rushing sound of waters, ran through the whole audience. If there be such a thing as heavenly music upon earth, I heard it there. I do not remember my heart to have been so elevated in divine love and praise, as it was there and then, for many years past."

It was this earnestness, common to both the brothers, which was the true source of John Wesley's power.

* Southey, i. p. 290.



His brother Charles brought to him affectionate sympathy, earnest preaching, and a popular minstrelsy. He wrote the hymns which ministered to the delight of the Societies, and still fill their collections ; but which have also passed into other hands, and have given comfort and instruction to many hearts. The sustaining impulse of the movement however came from John Wesley. The bone and sinew of the sect were in him. His brother was tender, imaginative, and impressible. John Wesley alone had the qualities which rule mankind. Courage and decision he had beyond ordinary men ; and he was often called on to exercise these.

When his Moravian associates lapsed into error, he separated from them. When their titled leader rebuked and sought to abash him, he cast off his authority. He separated from Whitefield, when he avowed opinions which Wesley condemned. Recusants in his own sect he cast off, when they differed from him, or disputed his laws. When his brother Charles, to whom he was tenderly attached, wavered in his convictions, Wesley was prepared to sever even these close ties, that he might pursue the course of duty, unaided, if need be, and alone.

In truth the mission, which he had chosen for himself, and for which he had singular qualifications, required an extraordinary measure of energy and firmness. Its interest, indeed, was great ; for the determination to lose no opportunity of declaring his mind to every one whom he met, opened to him an amount of work almost

incredible ; which indeed none could have performed, had he not combined a frame of iron with an unbending will. A chance word, dropped in conversation with a casual passenger ; a remark, shot from one of his innumerable sermons, striking an individual,—led to questions, intercourse, and intimacy, which Wesley followed out, as if he had no one else in the world to think of. At the call of an inquirer, or the summons of a penitent, he thought nothing of stopping his work at Bristol,* and travelling on an errand of mercy to London. Two or three convicts, labouring under religious anxiety, would make him diverge from his route from London, and turn aside to Reading ; the call of a fellow-labourer hurried him to Wales. From Bristol we find him passing to Malmesbury, then to Oxford ; two days after he re-appears in London. A dying convert asks his presence in Leicestershire ; as he is hurrying to see him, he meets on the roads of Bucks, a stranger, with whom he engages in discussion ; and, intent on inducing him to embrace his convictions, he holds fast by him, till their horses' feet rattle on the pavement of Northampton. Now we hear of him in Yorkshire, preaching, warning, comforting. On Sunday, the bright eye, alert figure, and penetrating look are noticed at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and Sabbath crowds are startled by hearing the hundredth Psalm raised in the Sandgate. The evening falls on a multitude swarming from the top to the foot of the hill near the Tyne, where Wesley,

* Journal, i. 246.

calm and collected, proclaims his messages of warning and comfort to a rude audience that had heard, till then, little of Christianity. Punctual as he is rapid, neither words nor entreaties, nor friends nor foes can stop him, and make him break an appointment. He starts from the smoke of Newcastle to keep an engagement at Bristol.

While he rides (for all his journeys, for many years, were made on horseback) he finds or makes an occasion of influence, and drops a word. Now a conversation at Knaresborough leads to further enquiry, and the family invite him on his return to visit them. Then he visits a clergyman to remove his doubts. Now he is in the house of a tradesman, engaged in a discussion; and now, on a Yorkshire moor, addressing a crowd; then on the highway preaching to the wayfarers. In the church where his father ministered, or, when shut out of that, on the tomb-stone over his remains, he preaches; here he is in the pulpit of a friend, there he is hooted and insulted in the street. At Sheffield he addresses a swarming audience; the same evening he sits, comforting a poor widow, as if city crowds had no place in his mind. We find him preaching in the market-place at Stroud, on the common at Hampton, among the poetic associations of Stratford, in the wealth of the vale of Evesham, among the miners of Cardiff, and under the black chimneys of Bristol.

Here he rouses a scoffer, or comforts a mourner, or puts down an upstart, or settles a quarrel. Now one of his Societies delights him with the picture of its har-

mony, while another engrosses him with its brawls. Yet in the one case as in the other, in storm as in calm, to the bed-ridden sick, or to the agitated crowd, he is always the same. Full of eagerness, yet perfectly calm, self-possessed, though enthusiastic; bearing a heart glowing with fervent warmth, a temper serene as a summer evening. One of his days would supply to an ordinary man the work of a week. One week of his would exhaust the strength of active men. He attends, on a Sunday morning and afternoon, the services of the Church, preaches to three audiences at three different hamlets, and returns to conclude the day in one of his social services, in thanksgiving and prayer.

Fifteen sermons he preached in one week, in places distant from each other, reached (as they only could be reached) on horseback, over roads on which a turnpike and the hand of Mac Adam was unknown. By ways marked only by ruts,* where morass struggled with mire, at times a broken causeway, at times a path impassable from snow, he drags his way on horseback, drenched, chilled, bespattered, in all seasons, through all weathers, and all hours of night and day. Hardly does he condescend to notice these inconveniences, and then only when, benighted and drenched to the skin, he is delayed on the road beyond his reckoning, and is not able to keep an appointment.† But if Wesley had physical obstacles of no slight sort to conquer, he met with others harder to bear.

* Journal, i. 440.

† Ibid. ii. 457.

CHAPTER II.

THE RECEPTION OF THE MISSION.

THE state of England, when Wesley appeared as a Reformer, was notable. The nation had made progress in population and wealth. The growth of the monied interest measured its progress in trade. The increase and number of towns attested its rising population. There was an advance also in national intelligence, though not such as to embrace the masses. But wealth is selfish, prosperity is heedless, and the middle and upper classes are apt to spend little thought on matters which do not directly touch themselves. Though it was an age in which Parliamentary discussions were strong, and debates had assumed importance, some of the grossest public abuses grew up unchecked. Our prisons were styes of filth and suffering ; ignorance, brutality, and intemperance, covered, like a leprosy, the peasantry.

If men looked for a remedy to the Church, the Church was helpless ; in part from its own defects,

somewhat from ours. Plundered at the Reformation, many of its endowments had passed to the laity. For a large body of the clergy there was a wretched provision. Without houses, or stipends, without the hope of bettering themselves, no wonder that it was only the refuse of the higher class that dropped sullenly into the Church. Many took to it, because they were too lazy to work, many because they were not fit for anything. In the Church they eked out a living in ways more easy than creditable: farming, labour, handicraft, were a resource: others took a fouler road, and hung on the rich, panders to their vices and follies. Wesley * found some boozing in taverns; the hunting-field and the Squire's parlour were places far above their hopes: the ale-house and the tap-room were their favourite haunts. Little service could be expected from such men;—little was got. Those who escaped scandal, did not rise to usefulness. With the exception of a few clergymen drawn to towns, or niched in family livings, the mass of the rural clergy in the days of Anne, George I., and George II., grovelled in the habits of a coarse sensuality. They were content to sail with the stream, and a dirty stream it was, down which English society was floating; little sense of religion was there, and as little of morality.

There needed at such a time a bold reformation; a movement, which should rouse society from its lethargy,

* Journal, i. p. 453.

and shake it into life. But the hand which could do this must be a strong one, and rough was sure to be the treatment with which such an assailant would be met.

To the clergy especially, such a reformation would be offensive. The clergy were in fact the bitterest opponents of the Methodist revival. They assailed it with taunts, scoffs, and ruder weapons. They instigated the mob. They excited the magistrates; they denounced the Methodist preachers before the bench, as ringleaders of rebellion. When converts repaired to their Churches, and filled seats long vacant, the clergyman abused them from the pulpit. When they came to the Lord's Table, he drove them away. In his eyes, the scold and the drunkard were harmless neighbours; but he could not bear the scandal of their reformation. This was a double reproach to his character and his ministry. The converts were a set of rogues, the preachers double-faced hypocrites. The justices of peace took the same line with the clergy, and with equal keenness. Every jolly toper felt himself struck at by the Methodist teacher. The worthless and the decent among the gentry made common cause with the rabble. The pillory, pond, and gaol, were in their eyes the only fit places for such reformers. The passions of the mob concurred with the dislike of the higher classes, and the rabble was let loose under the august sanction of magistrates and mayors.

The Methodists suffered the fate of early Christianity

—but their doctrines were made more odious by their discipline and practice, which were aimed avowedly at the vices and follies of men. Such a warfare, once engaged in, was sharp, and the weapons used were of the coarsest sort.

In those days men were not nice in their violence, and the sufferer had scanty means of redress. The Magistrates led the way.* Those of Staffordshire took the first place in the fray. Thus ran their warrant :—

“ To all High Constables, Petty Constables, &c.

“ Whereas we, his Majesty’s Justices of the Peace for the County of Stafford, have received information that several disorderly persons, styling themselves Methodist Preachers, go about raising routs and riots, to the great damage of his Majesty’s liege people and against the peace of our Sovereign Lord the King ; &c.

“ These are in his Majesty’s name, to command you, and every one of you, within your respective districts, to make diligent search after the said Methodist Preachers, and to bring him or them before some of us, his said Majesty’s Justices of the Peace, to be examined concerning their unlawful doings.

“ Given under our hands and seals, this 7th day of October, 1743.

“ J. Lane,

“ W. Persehouse.”

* Wesley’s Journal, i. p. 414.

Nor was this view confined to the worthies of Staffordshire. In Cornwall* the Magistrates committed the Methodists to the House of Correction, as vagrants. They issued warrants to apprehend them, as having no lawful calling, and as disturbing the peace of the parish. Then they sentenced them to join the army as common soldiers.† Churchwardens and Constables turned out after them, as if to hunt down a runaway felon.‡ The mobs were nothing loth to have a hand in the affray. They pelted them with dirt in the streets; hooted them out of the markets; broke open their houses, destroyed their furniture, smashed the windows of their meeting-houses; assailed and terrified the Methodist women; beat and wounded the men.§ Sailors thought it a spree, to hustle them; colliers and miners hunted them down. Sometimes the authorities interfered for their protection, more often they abetted the riot.||

In Bristol, where Methodism first assumed consistency and strength, the multitude resolved to put it down. After some nights' preparation, they assembled in force; "not only the courts and alleys, but all the street, upwards and downwards, was filled with people shouting, cursing, and swearing, and ready to swallow the ground with fierceness and rage." They defied the magistrates, abused the chief constable, and only yielded when a strong force arrested the ringleaders. In this

* Journal, pp. 446, 447.

† Ibid. i. p. 440.

‡ Ibid. p. 478.

§ Ibid. pp. 425, 428.

|| Ibid. pp. 435, 477, 411.

case the mayor acted with firmness, and the riot was put down.

In London, the mob stoned the Methodists in the streets—tried to unroof the meeting-house of the Foundry; threw crackers, at Chelsea, into the room where Wesley was preaching; at Long Acre they broke in the roof with stones. But in London the magistrates acted as became them, and gave Wesley efficient protection.

It was not so in Wednesbury, where both the clergyman and the neighbouring magistrates united to stir up the rabble. Horns were sounded to collect the mob—houses were broken open—property destroyed—men and women shamefully handled. For four or five months, Wednesbury was given up to these disgraceful outrages. From these Wesley narrowly escaped with his life; and still greater was the hazard he ran in Walsall, where the mayor accompanied and encouraged the rioters; there, assailed, bruised, and maimed, he hardly, and by his own personal efforts, escaped from the hands of the mob.

In other parts of the country, the outrages were even more systematic, and of more organized ferocity. The fate of the preachers was the same as that of the Irish Readers in our days; many were maimed by stones and cudgels; some were thrown into ponds, and held under water till they were nearly dead; others were daubed with mud and paint. Those who attended the Methodist meetings were objects of savage violence; they

were pelted with eggs filled with blood ; in the streets they were so roughly handled that many, especially the women, never recovered the outrage. Every public event, prosperous or adverse, was laid hold of to excite the mob against the Methodists. In the Rebellion, they were denounced as partisans of the Stewarts, and Charles Wesley had gravely to defend himself before a bench of magistrates at Wakefield, for a supposed allusion, in his sermon, to the Pretender. In Cornwall, when news arrived of a victory over the Spaniards, the multitude shewed their joy by pulling the Methodist preacher's house to the ground. A more serious mode of annoyance was resorted to by the magistrates ; who seized the Methodist preacher, under color of a press-warrant, and sent him as an "able-bodied man, who had no lawful calling," to a king's ship, or to the army. Thus Maxfield was seized in Cornwall, and Wesley at Gwenap, and John Nelson, torn from his home at Birstal, was sentenced by the Justices at Halifax—the vicar of Birstal sitting on the bench ; and Beard, pressed into the army, after undergoing a long confinement in prisons—which were then dens of filth and fever—paid for his sufferings with his life.

In Cork, the mayor made a curious compromise between his duty and his dislike to the Methodists : when the mob became outrageous, he was sent for, and arrived with a party of soldiers ; he said to the mob, 'Lads, once, twice, thrice, I bid you go home ; now I have

done ;' and having thus discharged, as he thought, his duty, he gratified his taste by leaving the Methodists and the town in the undisturbed possession of the rabble.

In Falmouth, John Wesley was assailed even in the house where he was residing.

In Devizes, Charles Wesley was attacked by a mob, instigated by the curate, and plied with drink by two leading Dissenters ; they worked the engine on the house, smashed the windows, and were hardly prevented from untiling the roof.

At St. Ives, the usual accompaniment which greeted the Methodists was yells, stones, and mud. At Leeds, the same.* In many places worship was impossible ; in others, the scattered Methodists returned from their meetings, bruised and bleeding, as from a field of battle.†

But whatever was the extent of violence and danger, Wesley bore it with tranquil composure. In this respect, his brother rivalled him, and no less their lay coadjutors. Charles Wesley, when attacked at Devizes, calmly considered in what position it was proper that he should be found, when the mob should force an entrance into his room. John Nelson, in the prison at Bradford, lying on stinking straw, among filth from the shambles, sang hymns in response to songs of praise from his friends without, and replied to the courageous words of his wife, with a voice of resolute composure ; nor did the threats of military punishment, or the fury

* Journal i. 433 ; ii. 7.


† Ibid. i. 446.

of worthless officers move him from his serenity. In these points John Wesley set his followers an illustrious example. There was no bravado in his dealings with mobs, but the calmness of an undaunted mind. He never exposed his followers to treatment which he was not ready himself to bear. Wind, hail, rain, snow, and driving sleet he bore, in his journeys, with stoical composure. He often preached to audiences who, if they did not injure him, gave him no hospitality ; he was often glad to stop his horse near a bramble-bush in order to fill his stomach with the fruit. " Brother Nelson," said he, " we ought to be thankful that there are plenty of black-berries, for this is the best country that I ever saw for getting a stomach, but the worst for getting food." At St. Ives he had no bed, but lay on the floor, with a great-coat for his pillow, his friend having Burkitt's Notes on the New Testament for his head. " After being there near three weeks, one morning about three o'clock," says Nelson, " Mr. Wesley turned over, and finding me awake, clapped me on the side, saying, ' Brother Nelson, let us be of good cheer, I have one whole side yet, for the skin is off but one side.' "

The same equanimity accompanied him when he had to confront violence.

When he heard of the attack on his followers at Wednesbury, he went there to take his share of the danger. Before he arrived, the mob had been, for four months, the undisputed masters of the streets,

doing with the unhappy Methodists what they liked. Wesley began by preaching at mid-day in the middle of the town; and the mob, daunted by his courage, suffered him to preach undisturbed. But, in the evening, the house where he lodged was beset. Wesley had the ringleaders of the mob admitted into the room, addressed them, subdued them, and went out with them into the crowd. He got on a chair, and asked the rabble what they wanted. They wanted him to go to the Justice of the Peace; he consented, but the magistrate had good sense, and bade them go home. Then some one suggested a magistrate at Walsal, and thither they went, but there too the magistrate would not see them. As they were returning, and acting as an escort to the man whom they had wished to destroy, a furious mob poured out of Walsal, and, though his new friends fought gallantly in his defence, Wesley was soon alone in the midst of a rabble, "whose noise" as he says, "was like the roaring of the sea." Down the road to the town, a steep descent, he was dragged, several of the miscreants trying to trip him up. Clothes torn, covered with blows, bleeding in the mouth from the stroke of a stone, he was hauled into the main street, where none dared to receive and shelter him. He never lost his presence of mind, but watched for a moment when they were exhausted by fury, and he then demanded to be heard. His courage, composure, and then his words, had an effect. He followed his ad-



dress with a prayer, and such was the influence of his demeanour that the ring-leader, a prize-fighter, declared, "Sir, I will spend my life for you:" under this strange escort, Wesley passed from the crowd, strangely preserved.

In Falmouth, when a furious rabble broke open the door and rushed into the house, he stepped forward, and said, "Here I am, which of you has anything to say to me? To which of you have I done any wrong? To you, or you, or you?"* Singling out the ring-leaders, he walked bare-headed into the street, that all might see his face; and then, raising his voice, he said, "Neighbours, countrymen, do you desire me to speak?" On their crying, 'Yes, yes, he shall speak, no one shall hinder him,' he addressed them, though his words were heard only by a few; but the ring-leaders, struck and touched by his courage, declared that no one should lay a hand on him, and they interfered in his defence.

At Gwenap while preaching in the street, a magistrate rode furiously into the middle of the audience, ordered his servants to disperse them, and, springing off his horse, took hold of Wesley's cassock. In a transport of rage, he dragged Wesley along, crying, "I take you to serve His Majesty," so they walked arm in arm, a curious pair, for about three quarters of a mile. As the magistrate, abusing the Methodists, ran himself

* Journal i. 475, 477.

out of breath, Wesley quietly remarked, that their misconduct would hardly justify him in seizing and carrying off a clergyman; and the man, subdued and ashamed, mounted Wesley on his own horse, and conducted him back to the town.

At Penryn, which he reached by boat, a furious mob awaited his landing. He stepped out of the boat, looked the fiercest of them in the face, and, wishing them a good night, passed on. The same evening, as he approached Tolcarn, he was met by a few, who ran on to warn him not to go up the hill, as the rabble and the constables were waiting to seize him. He rode up, however, and, observing four or five men well dressed, he went straight to them and said, "Gentlemen, has any of you any thing to say to me? I am John Wesley." As he returned from preaching in the evening, a furious mob gathered round his door, and hemmed him in. "I rejoiced," he observes,* "and blessed God, knowing this was the time I had long been looking for, "and immediately spoke to them that were next me, of righteousness and judgment to come. At first not many heard, the noise round about us being exceeding great. But the silence spread further, till I had a great attentive congregation, and when I left them they all evinced much love, and dismissed me with many blessings."


In Plymouth a mob with drums and soldiers came to disturb him in his sermons. "After waiting a

* Journal i. 270.



quarter of an hour, perceiving the violence of the rabble still increasing, I walked down into the thickest of them, and took the captain of the mob by the hand. He immediately said, 'Sir, I will see you safe home, no man shall touch you. Gentlemen, stand off, go back, I will knock the first man down that touches him.'" So Wesley quaintly adds, "We walked on in great peace, and at the hotel-door parted in much love. I stayed in the street near half an hour after he was gone, talking with the people, who had now forgotten their anger."

The most absurd reports were circulated to keep up the excitement. The Methodists were allies of the Pretender, in league with the French, in the pay of Spain. Wesley was a Papist, a Jesuit, an emissary of the Pope, of the Pretender. But whatever was the watchword of the outcry, Wesley went on his way calmly, and neither attacks nor threats, neither mobs nor magistrates, turned him from his purpose. Nor could ridicule or annoyances disturb him. When Nash tried to interrupt him at Bath, he silenced him with a polite rebuke. The ballad-singers, who were sent to interrupt him in the street, he defeated, by telling his congregation to join in a hymn. The crowds, who pressed after him to stare, and called out, "Which is he," he put out by stopping and saying, "I am he," and they moved off. At St. Ives a jester tried to ridicule him. Wesley addressed him pointedly, and the man



slunk away. In the great gardens near Whitechapel, he was addressing a large multitude, a herd of cows was driven in among the audience, showers of stones were then hurled, one of which struck Wesley between the eyes, and drew blood; but, heedless of pain, he went on with his sermon, and subdued to interest and attention the multitude.*

His composure under danger shewed itself in a quiet humour. At Epworth, they said the mob was coming to pull the house down over their ears. "I told them, then our only way was to make the best use of it while it was standing; so I began expounding the tenth chapter of St. Matthew."

In Bolton, as Wesley preached from some steps of a house, the mob tried to throw him down; then they began to throw stones, but the stones, as Wesley remarks, struck the persons who were bawling at his ear, and he continued his discourse.

In Hull, he was pelted in the field, pelted in the coach as he came back, pelted in the house where he lodged, and the windows were smashed up to the highest story. The constables at last quelled the riot, which had so little effect upon Wesley that he slept as soundly as usual.

* Journal i. 373.



CHAPTER III.

THE REFORM.

WHATEVER Wesley's design was, there was evidence of its success. If he bore hardships and ran risks, he produced great effects. Wherever he went, he excited interest. When he preached, crowds collected to hear him: audiences of one thousand and fifteen hundred were small. He preached to five or six thousand, to ten and fifteen thousand auditors. Near Newcastle, the hill-side swarmed from its top to its base. At Minehead, the population deserted the town, and gathered to hear him on the shore. In Moorfields, seven thousand people were collected to hear him, and at one time ten thousand.* On Kennington Common, the audience was computed to be fifteen thousand; on another occasion twenty thousand.

At Gwenap, the hills were crowded; on one occasion there were computed to be thirty-two thousand present. At St. Ives, the beach swarmed with auditors. Even

* Journal i. 193, 211, 14, &c.

the hill of the Devauden had its hundreds, and to Hep-tonstall Bank, Leeds poured forth a congregation which hung on his lips with "serious and earnest attention." At Newcastle, he drew to the Sandhill a vast multitude; and into the valley of the Derwent, by the ruins of Blanchland, the lead-miners poured, from distances of many miles, to "drink in his every word." At Morpeth, in the market-place, Wesley's sermon was a stronger attraction than the business of the day. His side of the market was crowded; the stalls were empty; buyer and seller thronged to hear him. In Bolton, the throng was boisterous; but still and attentive in Birmingham. Gateshead-Fell poured out its colliers. In Sunderland, a house could not contain the audience. In Alnwick, Wesley had to remove from the court-house to the market-cross. When churches were open to him, they were beset for hours, and even a five o'clock early service found multitudes gathered to hear him.

The places where Wesley preached, often added to the effect of his sermons; at times he stood on commons and squares, the resort of numbers; at other times on hill-sides, or quiet nooks, where the picturesque scenery set off, as in a frame, the preacher and his audience. Now, under the summer sky, he preached beneath sycamore-trees, which, planted in old times, afford in England so deep a shade. At Gwenap, his favourite place was a natural amphitheatre, where he stood on the top of a wall as a pulpit, the people ranged in

rows on the low hills in front. Here "in the calm still evening, with the setting sun behind, and an innumerable multitude before, behind, and on either hand," he preached, and this, he says, was a magnificent spectacle—the sound of ten thousand voices, singing praises in harmony, gave forth a glorious music. At St. Ives his pulpit was a fragment of rock, ten feet in length, from which the ground descended in a slope to the sea; there, with the waves giving out their low deep undertone, the clear voice of the preacher passed shrill through the multitude, and there he preached on successive evenings, sometimes in storms, at other times in the stillness of the summer twilight.

In Exeter, he preached in the moat, now converted into a public garden, then thronged with attentive multitudes. Near Newcastle, at Blanchland, he chose a tomb-stone in the yard of a ruined Cathedral, and, standing by the ruins, while the hills were white with snow, sheltered by the walls, he preached to the people who sat round or knelt on the grass that waved on the tombs. At another place he selected the side of a mountain, partly clothed with noble trees, with a beautiful stream below, to fill each pause with its gentle music. Even near Leeds, he found a place of picturesque beauty; "an oval spot of ground, surrounded with spreading trees, scooped out, as it were" to form a theatre for the audience.

Weather did not deter him, and often supplied inter-

est and subject of remark. The cloud passing away—the sun bursting forth—the shower giving place to sunshine; the storm succeeded by calm—all were used by his quick perception as signs of a more glorious work, or subjects of thankful joy. Nature with her elements thus ministered to his words, and the outward landscape illustrated the thoughts and warnings of the preacher. Wesley's clear voice carried his words to enormous distances. Once he had the ground measured, and found that his voice was heard at a distance of eighty yards. At the age of seventy he preached in the open air to an audience of 32,000, and was heard to the outskirts of the congregation.*

Certainly the impression produced by his words was great. Of this we have full evidence, which the most sceptical cannot question. The colliers of Kingswood were, before the advent of Methodism, proverbial for the lawless habits of savages. Under Wesley's ministry they became civilized. Many were reclaimed to lives of piety. The mass was softened and tamed. Fighting ceased, and in the wood, which once resounded to curses and imprecations, a school-house arose.† The miners of Cornwall were notorious for their lawless habits: yet among these, Methodist societies sprang up, and bore fruit in the improved lives of many. To enumerate individual examples would be endless. There was not a town or county of England which did not

* Southey's *Life of Wesley*, ii. p. 64, 65.

† *Ibid.* i. p. 236.

furnish to Methodism its tests and testimonies. Drunkards made sober, voluptuaries becoming chaste ; the unruly learning peacefulness, the disorderly propriety ; tempers chastened ; passions conquered ; wills subdued ; these were matters of daily occurrence and of undoubted notoriety. It was the change in the lives of thousands which excited the hatred as well as the remark of the vulgar. It was the conversion of the worthless into the religious, which annoyed the careless clergy, while it filled their churches.

I take at random, from Wesley's Journal, a few examples. He received an invitation to visit an aged clergyman. The old man, venerable, and of remarkable presence, welcomed him with emotion. Nine years before, his only son had heard a sermon of Wesley's, and soon after sickened of the small-pox. On his death-bed, he praised God for the comfort he derived from the truths heard in that memorable sermon, and rejoicing, in love, full of comfort and of hope, he died. From that time, the old man loved Wesley, and longed to thank him, before he died. A woman, overwhelmed with affliction, went forth, as many have done, bent on suicide, to drown herself in the New River. Attracted by the sound of singing, she entered the meeting-house of the Foundry ; and there heard from Wesley's lips truths which comforted her. At Bolton, Wesley was received with the coarse ferocity of a savage mob. As he stood to preach on a door-step, the air

was darkened with stones. Unable to gain a hearing in the streets, he was forced to preach in a meeting-house. In one of his subsequent visits to Bolton, the barber who shaved him, said to him, "When you were at Bolton last, I was one of the most eminent drunkards of all the town ; but I came to listen at the window, and God struck me to the heart. I then earnestly prayed for power against drinking, and God gave me more than I asked ; he took away the very desire for it."

In London, Wesley was once sent for, to visit three poor women who had been reclaimed by his ministry.* He found one in great pain, consumed by sickness, giving thanks ; another, dangerously ill of the small-pox, resigned to the will of God ; a third, lying ill between her two sick children, without food or physic, praising God her Saviour, and desiring to depart and be with Him.

At Ashbourn, after he had preached on one occasion, an old sinner, notorious for swearing and drunkenness, came to him, and, catching him by the hands, exclaimed, "Whether thou art a good or a bad man, I know not, but I know the words thou speakest are good. I never heard the like in all my life. O that God would set them home upon my poor soul !" and with that the hardened man of eighty burst into tears. At St. Just, the constable apprehended a tanner of the name of Greenfield ; he was a man of forty-six years of age,

* Journal i. 269.

with a family, and had been notorious for cursing, drunkenness, and all manner of vice. He heard Wesley, and was so entirely reformed by his preaching, that he remained an altered man. His change and the avowal of his religious faith provoked the vulgar authorities, who arrested him as a culprit. But of those whom Wesley reclaimed,*—the infidel silenced, the atheist sent to his knees, the simple idiot charmed into devotion, the young woman elevated to piety, the mourner comforted, the desponding cheered, the despairing made hopeful, the hardened subdued, the child enlightened, and the doubting brought to peaceful trust; if I were to quote at large, I should transcribe a volume. Two cases I record.† Wesley had engaged to preach, for the first time, at Warkworth, and a chaise was sent to convey him thither from Alnwick. In the carriage he found a young woman overwhelmed with anguish, who poured out to Wesley the story of her trials. He told her, "The way lies straight before you: what you want is the love of God. I believe God will give it you shortly. Perhaps it is his good pleasure to make you, a bruised reed, the first witness here of that great salvation. Look for it, just as you are, unfit, unworthy, unholy, by simple faith,—every day, every hour." She listened to his words. In her next trial she proved their power. She was able

* Wesley's Journal, i. 11, 381; ii. 186, 195, 213, 220, 287, 386, 446.

† Southey ii. 57.

to seek and attain a strength superior to her own ; and to submit with a patience, hitherto unexercised, to her great trial. In such a change the benevolent heart of Wesley triumphed. "Ah, thou child of affliction, of sorrow and pain, hath Jesus found out thee also ? And he is able to find and bring back thy husband, as far as he is wandered out of the way !"

Among his converts, he visited one, a woman, ill in bed, who had buried seven children in six months, and who was now mourning a husband, tenderly loved. He found her in peace: "Do you not fret at any of these things ? Oh no, how can I fret at anything which is the will of God ? Let Him take all beside ; He has given me Himself. I love, I praise Him every moment." Such scenes of conquest over the trials of life, over bodily pain, and the fear of death, were scattered thick round his path ; and of many of them he was, beyond question, under God, the instrument.

Charles Wesley also produced great effects,—and his preaching was accompanied with many results. But John Wesley's tours were wider than his brother's, embraced the circuit of England, Ireland, and part of Scotland ; and everywhere he left traces, as memorable as those which Charles made in a narrower range. Charles Wesley moreover, as he advanced in life, discontinued his journeys, and confined himself chiefly to London. His great contribution to the cause of Methodism was his psalmody, which was sung in every con-

gregation of Methodists, and which influenced, by its variety and pathos, the hearts of thousands. His hymns are still on the lips of the miners of Cornwall, and the colliers of Somerset or Durham; they are familiar to the negroes of the West Indies, and are the solace of the slaves of the United States.

By all these various means the Methodist movement advanced. On all hands the change in the moral state of England began to show itself. The licentious habits of the vulgar were checked, and the immorality of the middle class, with the carelessness of the clergy, abated. The higher classes were least affected by the movement. Wesley had no liking for them; his sympathies lay with the poor. Still, even the listless indifference of the wealthy began to yield; and men enquired, with some anxiety, what was the cause of this great movement. A strange movement it was, which held up a life of primitive piety and rules of strictest morals, to a society that had relished the philosophy of Bolingbroke, the morality of Walpole, and the precepts of Chesterfield. Strange it was to pass from the atmosphere of the court of George the Second, and the conversation of his queen and courtiers, to the drawing-room of Lady Huntingdon and the home of Charles Wesley. Marvellous it was to rise from the Arian speculations of Clark, and the Unitarian confessions of clergymen, who met at a London Tavern to shake off subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, to visit the societies of those who

aimed at reviving ascetic purity, and recalled in their practice the virtues of the apostolic age. Never was so strange a contrast, or so abrupt a revival. The movement began to tell; it made men think; they raised their eyes from the sermons of Hoadley and the sayings of Selwyn, to the writings of John Wesley and his coadjutors. Even Dr. Johnson, the great moralist, was interested; and Bolt Court, with Fleet Street, began to marvel at the doings of Kingswood and the Foundry. Yet this was the work of one man, and was effected within twenty years.*

If any one would trace the results of Wesley's mission, he may see it in the changes in English literature, politics, and manners. The religious earnestness, which characterised the first years of the nineteenth century, contrasts with the disregard of church services, both on the part of clergy and laity, which was observable in the last half of the eighteenth century.† Gambling was so general then, that a bill was brought in to repress it (in 1782): drinking was the fashion of the age; of the scandalous state of the universities we have testimonies from Dr. Johnson, Gibbon, and Lord Chesterfield. Of the principles of public men, we learn from the examples of Walpole and the first Lord Holland. Lord Hervey's *Memoirs* depict the morality of the court; the popular

* By examining Wesley's *Journal* from 1738 to 1758, we perceive that the Methodist work was fully established within that period.

† See Mahon's *History*, vii. 473, and examples might be multiplied.

novels attest the condition of the educated. But, after twenty years of Wesley's labours, a great improvement came. Among the clergy, indifference gave way to the piety of Venn, Grimshawe, Newton, and Scott. The poetry of Swift made place for that of Cowper; and the novels of Smollett and Sterne, (1744—1759) and Mrs. Behn, were replaced by those of Dr. Johnson, Goldsmith, (1760), and Miss Burney (1778). The movement in Sunday schools began in 1781; and the labours of Howard, Clarkson, and Wilberforce, characterized the latter part of the century. Howard * as we know, owed his first impulse to a sermon of Wesley, and his exertions may be traced to the religious principles which gave nerve to his benevolence.

* Howard began his work in 1773.


CHAPTER IV.

THE ORGANIZATION OF METHODISM.

WESLEY's scheme was to draw together all those, within the Church, who were devout, and to induce them to live lives accordant with the precepts of the Church of England. He wished no change in the doctrines of the Church, he only asked that men should practise what they heard in its walls. He would preserve the Church's standard, but have men rise and act up to it. But his scheme involved several difficulties.

In making men conform to rules of piety, he could not exclude from his Society earnest persons of different sects. Those, who joined the Methodist societies, were therefore drawn from various communions, and Wesley suffered them to continue in the communion to which they had belonged. The effect of this was to engender hostility, at all events indifference to the Church among the Methodist body.

Wesley had early found that addresses from the pulpit must be fortified by rules of life, and that a scheme of united action must be devised. Hence arose the polity



of Methodism ; which grew out of wants detected and practical rules laid down.

The character of Wesley's mind was suggestive rather than reflective ; practical, not philosophical. He had the qualities which make an administrator, rather than the forethought which constitutes a legislator. In his system we find rules and expedients ; we must not look for deep forethought. The want of this has limited the power of Methodism, and abridged its sphere.

If we follow for a moment the history of the movement, we shall understand its nature and the characteristics of its founder. Methodist societies,* as Wesley tells us, first sprung up in Oxford in 1725. They grew out of the attempt, made by a few young men, to follow in practice the rules of holy living laid down by Jeremy Taylor. In ten years these societies had advanced so little, that the associates of the new fraternity did not exceed fourteen. On the return of Wesley from Georgia, in 1738, he found himself detained in London, and, while there, was importuned to preach. He preached with such effect, that churches were crowded ; and his popularity gave such umbrage, that the clergy closed their buildings against him. Thus it was that, "not daring to be silent," he resorted to Moorfields, and many persons, awakened by his sermons, became inquirers. To satisfy them, he fixed a time and place for conference with them. Twelve came ; then forty ; then

* Sermons, p. 132. Wesley's Works, vol. vii. p. 402.

a hundred. At length, interested in their cases, he took down their addresses, and resolved to continue his communications with them. Thus grew the first Methodist Society. It began to spread. Wesley's visits to Bristol increased it; and his journeys to the north. It took root at Newcastle, and extended to Cornwall. Soon it had embraced many parts of England, the south of Scotland, and several districts of Ireland.

But while regularity of life and singularity of practice stamped on this new party strange modes of action, they remained within the Church, which they showed no disposition to leave. Both the Wesleys were deeply attached to the Church of England, John Wesley through life, though he allowed himself in many irregularities, Charles Wesley, though also irregular, continued to the last a more unyielding regard.

"This," says John Wesley, "is the peculiar glory of the Methodists.* As long as I live, I trust none will rob us of this glory. We do not and will not form any separate sect, but from principle remain, what we always have been, true members of the Church of England. The Methodists know their calling, they weighed the matter at first, and upon mature deliberation determined to continue in the Church. Their fixed purpose is, let the Clergy or laity use them well or ill, by the grace of God, to endure all things, to hold on their own course, and to continue in the

* Sermon 132, vol. vii. pp. 408—410.

Church, maugre men or devils, unless God permits them to be thrust out." And he quotes with approval the advice of Mr. Ingham, "In the name of God, let nothing move you to secede from this resolution. God is with you of a truth, and so will He be, while you continue in the Church; but whenever the Methodists leave the Church, God will leave them." Wesley's early practice corresponded with these declarations. He attended the services of the Church. He received the communion within her walls. His converts did the same. As each became earnest in religion, he repaired to the Church. The Clergy too often, from love of ease and dislike of piety, drove them from the Church, at times by personal attacks from the pulpit, at times by excluding them from ordinances. Blame, no doubt, there was, but it should be fairly assigned. These are memories full of shame, but to us as churchmen, rather than to the Methodists.

The boast of Wesley was, that, in reviving the love of God and man in a portion of English society, he was vindicating the old faith and principles of the Church of England. His boast was just. "This charity,"* he says, "is the great medicine of life, the never-failing remedy for all the evils of a discordant world, for all the miseries and vices of men. Wherever this is, there are virtue and happiness, there is humbleness of mind, gentleness, long-suffering, the whole image of God;

* Sermon 132, p. 404.

and, at the same time, a peace that passeth all understanding, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. This is the religion of the Bible. The Bible declares that love is the fulfilling of the law. This is the religion of the primitive Church, of the whole Church in the purest ages. And this is the religion of the Church of England, as appears from all her authentic records, from the uniform tenor of her liturgy, and from numberless passages in her homilies. The scriptural primitive religion of love is beautifully summed up in that one comprehensive petition, "Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy Holy name."

But to promote the practice of such principles was no easy task. Difficult at all times, it was then especially so, from the opposition which it entailed. No sooner did a man try to reform his life, than his neighbourhood rose against him. Friends and relatives denounced him as mad. Sometimes they sent for the doctor. In some cases they shut him up in a mad-house. In all cases they taunted and tormented him, and the daily taunts of friends are a persecution.

It was natural that the harassed disciple should look somewhere for comfort. To whom so naturally as to his teacher? To him he turned for advice. Was he right in his conduct? was he too strict? ought he to withstand his relatives? or should he give way?

These were questions earnestly put, and it would have been cruel to refuse to answer them. Hence arose the connexion between the Methodist preacher and his flock, and the necessity of frequent meetings, and interviews; conferences for counsel, and gatherings for prayer. But the teacher was quickly removed from his hearers, by journeys and engagements. Neither Wesley, nor his brother, could remain long in one place. It was necessary to provide a substitute. Could they not find one among themselves? The sympathy of sufferers was a comfort, communication was strength. Some minds were vigorous, others were matured. Hence arose periodical meetings, among the members, for counsel and prayer. But these meetings required rules of direction, and, in Wesley's absence, some one to enforce them. It became necessary to select a qualified person to take the direction, and to hold the post of superintendent. The Methodists were therefore divided into sections, and each section was placed under a chief. Hence arose *classes* and *class leaders*; the class usually consisting of twelve.*

But, among the members of the Methodist body, there were many who suffered from poverty, and whom it was a duty to relieve. The body itself was not affluent. A great portion were drawn from the labouring class, from among mechanics, and small tradesmen. Resources could be found only in the collection of

* Wesley's Works, viii. p. 258.

small sums, often renewed. The pence of the many became the revenue of the poor.

This system had been used by the Church of Rome; it was now first applied to Protestant objects.

Every member of the society was bound to give his weekly penny. For those who were too poor to pay, the richer members paid. One duty of the Leader was, to collect the pence in his weekly round. *Stewards* were named to receive the money, and keep the general stock. But it was in order to secure moral discipline, and to promote religious influence, that the chief attention of the Leader was turned. It was soon found impossible for him to make a weekly visitation of every member of his class. A meeting was therefore held, once a week, at a stated place, for conference. There advice was given, disputes were settled, and doubts were removed. The meeting, after this its ordinary business, was concluded with singing and prayer. Smaller divisions of the more earnest were formed under the name of Bands. The object of these was, to confess their sins to each other, to answer searching questions, and to detail their experience. The evil of this practice soon became apparent. Another observance was the Watch-night: a continuance of the weekly meeting through the night, in psalmody and prayer. The danger of this also is evident, and its liability to abuse. The last peculiar observance was that of the Love-feast:

* Sermon 107, vol. vii. p. 197.

three being held in each quarter, one for men, another for women, a third for the two sexes united ; a practice which, with its accompaniment of detailed personal experience, was highly objectionable. Once a quarter, the Societies of the circuit were inspected by the chief pastor, each member being enquired into in his turn, a work which, at first, Wesley reserved for his brother and himself. Each man was passed under review, and Wesley tested his character by such sources of information as were open to him. To those with whom, after this inspection, Wesley was satisfied, he gave a ticket, signed with his name ; those who did not receive it, dropped, as a matter of course, out of the society. Thus, without a stir, the society was periodically purged, and so thoroughly was this done by Wesley, that we hear of societies reduced by him, at one stroke, from several hundred members to a handful. The children of the Methodists were provided for by the establishment of schools ; the aged and infirm by the institution of poor-houses,—the relief of the sick required a more systematic order. They often suffered, without their cases being known. This led to the establishment of Visitors, who should make the sick their special care, take, each, a district, overlook the families, and visit the sick members, thrice a week. Funds for their relief were drawn from the Stewards. Medicine and advice, Wesley himself for a time supplied.*

* Vol. viii. p. 254. There was an electrifying machine for the poor, in a building close to the Foundry.

To this system was added, a Loan Fund—the money for which was contributed by the rich, and dealt out, once a week, for the assistance of the industrious, by the stewards.

Our modern plans of parochial benevolence are evidently derived from Wesley's practical arrangements. So well did his sensible sagacity anticipate the provisions of later experience.

Under this system, which for many of its ends was well adapted, the Society grew. It became an incorporation ; with leaders, resources, and laws. One want was early felt, and the supply of this required means ; the churches were closed against the Society, it was needful therefore to find places of meeting. However great was the physical endurance of Wesley, his followers could not always worship in storm and rain. The English climate was not favourable for such experiments. The first meeting-house was built near St. James's Church-yard in Bristol, and the first stone was laid in May 1739. The Cathedral of Methodism in London was the large brick building, known by the name of the Foundry, because government had once cast cannon there. It occupied the site of Finsbury square, and remained used as a place of worship till 1777 ; having connected with it, Wesley's house, a school, and a place for the publications of the Wesley's. A bell on the top of the building used to summon the Methodists, at five in the morning, to the daily service. Wesley

was anxious to vest the Methodist places of worship in trustees, and to rid himself of these temporal cares. But Whitefield was on this occasion more long-sighted than Wesley. Though *he* had in mind to organize a sect for himself, he appreciated the need of a permanent system ; and he felt that, if the trustees held the building, they would rule the preacher. He required therefore, before he would aid in the collection of money, that John Wesley should dismiss the trustees, and, charging himself with the whole responsibility, should assume in his own person the right over the Meeting houses. This was done, the original deeds were cancelled, the trustees acquiesced ; nor did Wesley shrink from the burden. He saw the value of the advice. Expensive buildings, and an empty exchequer would have daunted most men. But it was not in John Wesley to doubt or fear. "Money I had not, nor any human prospect of procuring it, but I knew that the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof ; and in His name set out, nothing doubting." It is to be noted with what regularity, under the system of penny collections, the funds flowed in. All the wants of the growing commonwealth were met, and Methodism, by its financial system, has set an example to other sects,* and has maintained with liberality its own institutions, down to our day. One thing Wesley exacted ;—that the buildings should be plain. His model was a bad one, bad as the taste of his times ; and his sect has helped

* The Free Church has avowedly copied its plans.

to cover England with monstrosities of ugliness. But if his architectural knowledge failed him, not so his sagacity; the building was bad, but the trust-deed was a model *—drawn up by three shrewd lawyers, and vesting the property absolutely in himself and in those whom he should appoint—untrammelled by conditions: so that the preacher might say his say freely, and for all times. While the building was thus secured to the Methodist persuasion, the overweening powers of managers were cut off, and against private pews, family interests, and a vulgar oligarchy, John Wesley provided.

But another difficulty met the Methodist movement. However well ordered the Societies might be, they required pastoral care. Whatever might be the efficacy of leaders, visitors, stewards, and schoolmasters, this, the highest office was not filled. The man, who was to preach, admonish, and instruct—was wanting. For a short time Wesley had cherished the hope that the office of pastor over his flock would have been assumed by the clergy of the Church. Attached to the Church, and well affected even to those who condemned him, he hoped that the clergy, when they found the Methodist converts frequenting their ordinances, would have extended to them, as to the best of their flock, their pastoral care. Had it been so, the divergence of Methodism might have been delayed, if not restrained. But, as the majority of the clergy treated the Methodists

* Vol. viii. p. 318.

with contumely,* Wesley was constrained to provide other shepherds for his aggrieved and disheartened flock. His first expedient was to select laymen for this purpose ; persons who should read the Scriptures, expound these to the members, and pray with them. But this step led to others. The Reader soon wished to preach ; the expositor by the fire-side felt qualified to lecture from the pulpit. Innovation soon began. The London Society† now amounted to 2,800 members, and required special care. In the absence of Mr. Wesley, Maxfield, to whom the charge had been committed, began to preach. Wesley was at first greatly annoyed, but he saw the necessity of acquiescing ; and the exertions of his preachers, especially of Nelson, satisfied him of the value of their co-operation.

It is probable that, under any circumstances, this result would have arrived. It was brought on earlier by the opposition of the clergy and their scandalous incapacity. In parishes where the clergy did their duty, independent preaching was not set up ; but, where the parish minister was careless or hostile, Methodist preachers were sought.‡ And they were drawn from every variety of rank and employment. From the quarry came the mason ; the shoemaker left his awl ; the mechanic his craft ; the tradesman his shop ;—all served under Wesley, and to each he gave his appointed work.

* Moore's Life, p. 517.

† Such was the number of the London Society, vol. vii. p. 197.

‡ Wesley vol. vii. pp. 198, 199. Southey ii. p. 201. Wesleyan Centenary, pp. 106, 107.

The country was divided into circuits, to each of which, according to its size, two or three preachers were assigned, and over them was placed a superior preacher or superintendent. It was one of Wesley's plans, which he engrafted permanently on Methodism, that no preacher should occupy the same station long. They were often removed at the end of one year. Two years was the usual period of their stay. The Conference was not permitted to extend it beyond three years.

But the preacher was advised by Wesley, in his itinerancy, rarely to occupy a preaching station above six or eight weeks. "Were I to preach one whole year in one place," he says, "I should preach both myself and my congregation asleep. Neither can a man find matter for preaching every morning and evening, nor will the people come to hear him."

No doubt the rule was effectual for its object. It stimulated and attracted *an audience*. But it marks, in Wesley's mind, a misunderstanding of the nature of the pastoral office, and of the true source of pastoral influence. The idea arose indeed from Wesley's peculiar character and his sphere of action. *His* work was to rouse and awaken men—and to pass on. But in making this, the preparatory work of the missionary, the regular function of the minister, he introduced a principle of weakness into his polity, and lowered as well as limited its sphere.

The office of the Methodist preacher was to visit the towns or hamlets within his district, to preach every

evening, teach from house to house, visit the sick, and meet the members of the Society.

It was necessary further to make provision for the preachers' maintenance. Their demands were at first small, and their life, in the early stage of Methodism, was one of hardship. When one of the early preachers died, all the money he left was one shilling and four pence ; not enough for his burial, but "enough," says Wesley, "for any unmarried preacher of the Gospel to leave to his executors." But, when monied men joined the body, some more adequate provision became indispensable. The Stewards were resorted to, and the funds gathered from the Methodist Society were put under contribution. Four shillings * a day was the allowance to a wife, during the absence of her husband ; twenty shillings a quarter to each child ; eighteen-pence (we smile at the stint) was added when the preacher was at home ; four-pence for breakfast, six-pence for dinner, four-pence for tea, and the same for supper.

The school at Kingswood, built by the liberality of the richer converts, superintended by the minute directions of Wesley, was to serve as the Refuge for the preachers' sons. The worn-out preacher, or the preacher's widow, were to receive ten pounds yearly ; the children a gift of ten pounds. But, on the other hand, every travelling preacher was to pay one guinea when he entered on his work in the Society, and half a guinea yearly.

* Wesley says (vol. viii. p. 314, 315) that every circuit was to provide her with a lodging, coal, and candle, or allow her £15. a year.

CHAPTER V.

THE TEACHERS.

WESLEY felt it to be indispensable to impress on those who co-operated with him, a general impulse, and to preserve unity of purpose, and uniformity of teaching. During Wesley's life, the machine felt the pressure of the master's hand. None ever enjoyed greater confidence on the part of his followers, or exercised over them a more undisputed sway. No Grand Master of the Templars, or Jesuits, ever reached so absolute a power. For Wesley's power was not that of force, but of affection. It grew out of the reverence felt by the disciple for a teacher whom he loved. Wesley called the preachers to labor under him, as "sons in the Gospel;" and filial was the deference with which they regarded him.

Their feelings towards him furnished interesting evidence of the single-mindedness as well as energy of the man. There was indeed, in his handling of his follow-

ers, no effeminacy, but the firmness of a strong mind. The discipline was austere: early rising—hard work—frugal fare. “Do you eat,” he says,* “no more at each meal than is necessary? Do you drink water? Why not? Did you ever? Why did you leave it off? If not for health, when will you begin again? to-day? How often do you drink wine or ale? every day? Do you want it?” Again,

“Be diligent; never be unemployed a moment; never be triflingly employed.

“Do not affect the gentleman. You have no more to do with this character, than with that of a dancing-master. A preacher of the Gospel is the servant of all.”

“Be ashamed of nothing but sin; not of fetching wood (if time permit) or of drawing water; not of cleaning your own shoes, or your neighbours.”

Wesley exacted entire obedience. “Be punctual,” he says; “Do everything exactly at the time; and, in general, do not mend our rules, but keep them.”

“Act in all things not according to your own will, but as a son in the Gospel. If you labour with me in our Lord’s vineyard, it is needful that you should do that part of the work which we advise, at those times and places which we judge most for His glory.”

He watched over the preachers’ studies with the

* Vol. viii. p. 311.

minute direction of a schoolmaster, adapting his counsels to the individual case. One was no reader of books. "You do not read; hence your talent in preaching does not increase; there is little variety, no compass of thought. Reading only can supply this, with daily meditation and daily prayer. Oh, begin! Fix some part of every day for private exercises. Whether you like it or not, read and pray daily! It is for your life. There is no other way; else you will be a trifler all your days, a pretty superficial preacher." *

Writing to another, who was clever, but desultory, he bids him follow the *exact course of reading* he prescribed; and take it in the order he advised. "If you want more books, let *me* recommend more, who best understand your scheme."

To one that ran the risk of being a bookworm, he says—"Beware you be not swallowed up in books; an ounce of love is worth a pound of knowledge."

His directions on preaching were practical and wise.†

"Always suit your subject to your audience. Take care not to ramble, but keep to your text. Take care of anything awkward or affected, either in your gesture, phrase, or pronounciation. Avoid quaint words. Do not usually pray above eight or ten minutes (at most) without intermission; and conclude the service in an hour."

His own style was sharp and clear. He enforced this on others.‡ "Clearness is necessary for you and

* Southey ii. 78.

† Vol. viii. 305.

‡ Southey ii. 79.

me, because we are to instruct people of the lowest understanding. We should constantly use the most common, little, easy words (so they are pure and proper) which our language affords."

Formed under these rules he could say of his assistants with truth:—"In the one thing, which they profess to know, they are not ignorant men. I trust there is not one of them who is not able to go through such an examination in substantial, practical, experimental divinity as few, if any, candidates for holy orders, even in the university (I speak it with sorrow and shame, and in tender love) are able to do."

But to effect this, he kept his hand always on the reins: now the whip, now the curb, were used by him,—reproof or playful warning. To one who was out of sorts, and imagined himself unfit for his place, he says:—"Dear brother, you are indeed out of your place; for you are reasoning, when you ought to be praying. Do what you are bid; stay where you are put; and serve as I order." To another he writes, "Print nothing without my approbation."* "Sing no hymns of your own composing." "To me the preachers have engaged themselves, to submit to serve me, as sons in the Gospel. None needs to submit unless he will. Every preacher, and every member, may leave me when he pleases. I have the same power still to appoint, when, and where, and how each should help me, and to

* Vol. viii. p. 305.

tell any, (if I see cause) I do not desire your help any longer. But they do me no favour, in being directed by me, it is true, my reward is with the Lord ; but at present I have nothing from it but trouble and care."

With this absolute episcopacy, to which helpers and members gladly submitted, he governed the Methodists during his life, in all things, small as well as great. The dress, manners, health, and habits of his preachers, fell under his care. "Take as little meat, drink, and sleep as nature will bear, and as much exercise," was his specific against nervous disorders.

"Do you eat no flesh suppers? no late suppers? Do you take no more food than is necessary at each meal? you may know, if you do, by a load at your stomach, by drowsiness or heaviness, and, in a while, by weak or bad nerves." "After preaching," he says, "take a little lemonade, mild ale, or candied orange-peel; all spirituous liquors, at that time especially, are deadly poison."

"Beware of slovenliness, either in speech or dress; wear no slouched hats; be merciful to your beast; not only ride moderately, but see with your own eyes that your horse be rubbed, fed, and bedded."

Especially rigorous he was against long and loud preaching. "Will you preach every morning and evening, endeavouring not to speak too long or too loud?"*

To one who erred in excess in this department, he

says :—" It was said of our Lord, He shall not cry ; that word properly means, he shall not scream. Scream no more, at the peril of your soul. God now warns you by me, whom he has set over you. Speak as earnestly as you can, but do not scream. Speak with all your heart, but with a moderate voice." *

In fact the Society,—(and Wesley, while he lived, represented it)—was to move, direct, and govern its agents, as absolutely as the prior of a monastic order. The Society was to publish books, to prepare and print hymns ; to provide and administer medicines ; to prevent the preachers from trading, printing, or quacking ; nay, to give counsel to the preachers, when entering on matrimony. Yet, while Wesley was thus constituting a powerful corporation, he shrunk long from claiming for it a separate name, or the authority of a church. The Society was never to be called " the church," † nor the preachers " ministers," nor the houses " meeting-houses ;" nor were they to take out licences, as dissenting places, but only " houses for public worship ; " " Exhort all our people to keep close to the Church and Sacraments. Warn them against despising the prayers of the Church. Our service is not such as supersedes the Church service : it presupposes public prayer. If the people put ours in the room of the Church service, we hurt them that stay with us, and ruin them that leave us. Carefully avoid whatever

* Southey ii. 210.

† Vol. viii. pp. 308, 309.

has a tendency to separate men from the Church, and let all the servants in our preaching-houses go to church once on Sunday at least." "The Methodists * are not a sect or party ; they do not separate from the religious community to which they at first belonged ; they are still members of the church,—such they desire to live and to die,—and I believe one reason, why God is pleased to continue my life so long, is to confirm them in their present purpose not to separate from the church. . . . I hold all the doctrines of the Church of England. I love her liturgy. I approve her plan of discipline."

The same feelings led him to shrink from *ordaining* men to the ministry. He would call them anything but ministers ;—assistants, helpers, preachers. "We received them wholly and solely to preach, not to administer sacraments."† He looked upon them as laymen, whom the society permitted,‡ and "God has called to preach." "I say permit, because we ourselves have hitherto received it in no other light. It is not clear to us that Presbyters, so circumstanced as we are, may appoint or ordain others ; but it is, that we may direct as well as suffer them to do, what we conceive they are moved to by the Holy Ghost." But though his love for the church thus held him fast, he was too sagacious not to see in what direction his polity was drifting. He doubted

* Vol. vii. p. 266.

† Ibid. p. 265.

‡ Southey ii. 75.

indeed whether the forbearance he had exercised, and the restraints he had imposed on himself, were any longer tenable. "That I have not gone too far yet I know, but whether I have gone far enough, I am extremely doubtful. I see the blind leading the blind, and both falling into the ditch. Unless I warn, in all ways I can, these perishing souls of their danger, am I clear of the blood of these men?"

"As yet we have not taken one step further than we were convinced was our bounden duty.* It is from a full conviction of this, that we have preached abroad, prayed extempore, formed societies, and permitted preachers who were not episcopally ordained. And were we pushed on this side, were there no alternative allowed, we should judge it our bounden duty rather wholly to separate from the church, than to give up any one of these points; therefore if we cannot stop a separation without stopping lay preachers, the case is clear, we cannot stop it at all. But if we permit these, should we not do more? Should we not appoint them rather? To appoint them is far more expedient, if it be lawful;—but is it lawful for presbyters, circumstanced as we are, to appoint other ministers? This is the very point wherein we desire advice, being afraid of leaning to our own understanding."

His decision however, after much pressure from the preachers, and much hesitation in his own mind, was,

* Southey ii. p. 309.

in the outset, against this. He would not ordain the preachers nor suffer them to administer the sacraments ; though we shall find that his resolution, on this point, gave way at a later period of his life.

But if any one fancies that John Wesley's example justifies enthusiasm, the neglect of study, or the want of due preparation for the duties of a pastor ; he does not know the man. Wesley was himself from early life a hard student ; he had acquired, at the University, distinction both as a scholar and logician, and he continued, through life, to read almost every work of literature as well as theology, which appeared in his day.

These he read, when travelling on his horse as he jogged along his countless journeys, and in his chaise when he took to that—in every moment of leisure, and in the intervals of sickness.

Certainly, if any one admires his example, and would follow it, he must not be idle. Zeal and manual labor he considers no apology for ignorance. He would not allow his preachers so to excuse themselves. Some pleaded that they adhered to the Bible ; that this was the only book they cared to know. This plea he ridiculed.* “ Read the most useful books, and that regularly and constantly. Steadily spend all the morning in this employ, or at least five hours in four-and-twenty. ‘ But I read only the Bible.’ Then you ought to teach others to read only the Bible ; but if so, you need

* Vol. viii. p. 302.

preach no more. Just so said George Bell, and what is the fruit? Why he neither reads the Bible nor anything else. This is rank enthusiasm. If you need no book but the Bible, you are got above St. Paul. He wanted others too. "Bring the books," says he, "but especially the parchments." 'But I have no taste for reading! Contract a taste for it by use, or return to your trade.' "Why do we fail? chiefly because we are enthusiasts, looking for the end without using the means."

To those who grumbled and doubted, and spoke of occupation and want of time, his answer was peremptory, and it is an answer by which all of us may profit. "Be diligent, never be unemployed a moment, never be triflingly employed; never while away time; neither spend any more time, at any place, than is strictly necessary."

This was the secret of his strength, by which he passed from pulpit to chamber; from bedside to street; from town to town; preaching, advising, examining, exhorting; never late, never in haste, always ready, collected and clear;—time found for all his work, because all his work was done at the time.

No doubt he requires much. No drones in his hive: work from early dawn: the preacher's day was to begin at four,—prayer; then reading; then, at five o'clock in the morning, the sermon. The work of pastoral visiting was to follow this. "No loitering;

exactness in redeeming the time." Visit every house, teach every inmate; "diligently instruct and vehemently exhort all parents;—address the young. Make every particular plain to their understanding; fix it in their memory;—write it in their hearts." In the use of books he would have his followers liberal, but churlish of bodily ease. Fasting he recommends; not indeed entire abstinence from food, but the giving up of luxuries. "Milk in place of tea; a potatoe-dinner for a better one."

The great lever of control over the Society was the Conference, borrowed perhaps from Presbyterianism, but with characteristic modifications. It was to be a General Assembly, held every year for conference, legislation, and discipline: but it was confined to the teachers. It did not include the laity.* It began in 1744, when the two Wesleys met in London along with four clergymen and four lay-preachers; Its next meetings were in Bristol, Lincoln, and Leeds, and it has continued since that time to direct the affairs of the Methodist Society. By the Conference, preachers were appointed, and their sphere assigned;† the building of new preaching-houses decided on; subscriptions from the preachers received, and the stations of the preachers fixed for the ensuing year. Such was the discipline which held together that great Society, which has lasted

* Wesley's Works, Vol. vii. pp. 198, 265.

† Ibid. Vol. viii. pp. 312, 320, 814; Vol. vii. p. 266.

to our day. Methodism was not confined to England. It spread to some extent in Ireland. In Scotland, though Wesley was received with some favor, his doctrines never took root.* The soil was too stiff, he complains. The air of Calvinism blew too keen.† Whitefield had warned him that, if he spoke like an angel, men would not listen to him. His earnestness and his powers did indeed at times procure him a hearing. In Glasgow he was well received. He preached in Aberdeen, in King's College Hall, and received the freedom of the city of Perth from the magistrates. But if the success of Methodism was small in the North, it spread with vigour in the New World. In North America Whitefield had made a deep impression. The Colonial Church had fallen into a state of weakness; its defects and carelessness had injured the influence both of Episcopacy and of the Crown. There lay, in truth, within this one of the causes of the separation from England. In 1769 Wesley despatched to America itinerant preachers. In 1771 they had increased to forty, and had made among the negroes 7000 converts to the Society. The civil war and the independence of the States repressed the work. The Methodist preachers were suspected of loyalty to England and its church. Many had to fly; some were imprisoned. But as the Constitution of the States became settled, and their independence was recognized, the Methodists resumed their activity. Still,

* Vol. ii. p. 219.

† Moore's Life, ii. 243.

they were beset by difficulties. The impossibility of obtaining baptism or the Lord's Supper tried their principles, and compelled them to cast about for a remedy. Wesley then altered the system to which hitherto, though with some doubts, he had adhered. Hitherto he had refused to regard his preachers as clergymen ; he had not permitted them to administer sacraments. He sought to procure episcopal ordination for them, and he had applied for that purpose to the Bishop of London. His request was refused, and he was thus left, in England, to work as he could with the few clergy who adhered to him. But in America there were no clergy at all. All had fled. Here therefore a new expedient was necessary. It was not his nature to falter in such an emergency. He drew up a plan for church government in America ; established an ordination-service ; * conferred orders on several persons, and sent out one as a superintendent, who, avoiding the title, should exercise some of the functions of a Bishop. Wesley's justification of this course, which deeply grieved his brother Charles, he has given us in his journal.

Whatever we may think of his reasoning, his policy was successful. The Methodist Society in the States grew rapidly. In fifteen years its numbers had swelled from 15,000 to 70,000. In 1820 they had reached 280,000, and in our own day, while they amount to 150,000 in our North American Colonies, they far exceed

* Moore's Life, ii. 326, 342.

in the States* any other religious body ; and if we exclude the Baptists, Methodism will be found to equal the combined numbers of Presbytery, Independency, Popery, Episcopacy, Lutheranism and Unitarianism.

* The Seventh Census of the United States' Religion and Church accommodation.

| <i>Denominations.</i> | <i>Number of Churches.</i> | <i>Aggregate accommodation.</i> | <i>Total value of Church property in Dollars.</i> |
|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Methodists | 12,467 | 4,209,333 | 14,636,671 |
| Baptists | 8,791 | 3,130,878 | 10,931,382 |
| Presbyterians | 4,584 | 2,040,316 | 14,369,889 |
| Congregationalists ... | 1,674 | 795,177 | 7,973,962 |
| Episcopalians | 1,422 | 625,213 | 11,261,970 |
| Roman Catholics..... | 1,112 | 620,950 | 8,973,838 |
| Lutherans..... | 1,203 | 531,100 | 2,867,886 |
| Unitarians..... | 2,113 | 137,367 | 3,268,122 |
| Universalists..... | 494 | 205,462 | 1,767,015 |

CHAPTER VI.

WESLEY'S DISCIPLES.

THE great instrument of the progress of Methodism, was the preaching talent of its founders. John Wesley was not equal as an orator to Whitefield; but the directness of his preaching often struck home, where Whitefield had failed. John Nelson, the stone-mason, listened to Whitefield's oratory as to a pleasant song; he relished the words, and loved the preacher, but he was not satisfied; his convictions were strong, but his doubts prevailed. The sermon of Wesley at Moorfields struck him to the heart. His account of it gives us an idea of Wesley's manner and style.* "As soon as he got upon the stand, he stroked back his hair, and turned his face to where I stood, and I thought he fixed his eyes on me; his countenance struck such an awful dread upon me, before I heard him speak, that it made my heart beat like the pendulum of a clock;

* Southey: i. p. 417.

and when he did speak, I thought his whole discourse was aimed at me."

In his numerous sermons,* we trace the characteristics of his oratory: the sermons are short, expressed in terse language; he uses words of great plainness, presenting ideas which are not graphic, nor helped by the imagination, but impressive from their clearness. Short, sharp questions run like volleys of musketry along the line of argument, and the mind, startled, and struck, is at last overwhelmed by the discharge. The individual is addressed, as if he stood alone before the pulpit, looking up to the preacher, and receiving his counsels and warnings. "Who art thou, that now seest and feelest both thine inward and outward ungodliness? Thou art the man! I want thee for our Lord. I challenge thee for a child of God by faith. The Lord hath need of thee. Thou, who feelest thou art just fit for hell, art just fit to advance his glory. O, come quickly, believe in the Lord Jesus, and then, even thou art reconciled to God."†

"Thou ungodly one, who hearest or readeest these words, thou vile, helpless, miserable sinner, I charge thee before God, the Judge of all, go straight unto Him, with all thy ungodliness. Take heed thou destroy not thine own soul, by pleading thy righteousness more or less. Go, as altogether ungodly, guilty, lost,

* See especially Sermon 121, Vol. vii. pp. 307, 308.

† Southey: i. 407.

destroyed, deserving and dropping into hell; and then shalt thou find favour in His sight, and know that He justifieth the ungodly. As such thou shalt be brought unto the blood of sprinkling, as an undone, helpless, damned sinner. Thus look unto Jesus! There is the Lamb of God, who taketh away thy sins! Plead then no work—no righteousness of thine own—no humility, no contrition, no sincerity! In no wise! That were in very deed to deny the Lord that bought thee. No. Plead thou singly the blood of the covenant, the ransom paid for thy proud, stubborn, sinful heart!”

We can understand how, to the harassed and trembling conscience, such doctrine, in such clear, strong words, would bring comfort. Many drank it in, as did the stonemason, with delight. Many heard it, with the people of Newcastle, as tidings from another world. It opened to them a sudden revelation of new joy.

The same doctrine, in the mouth of Charles Wesley, produced like effects, and the most prominent preachers copied the characteristics of Wesley. Poetry was used to help this preaching; and hymns written by the Wesleys, especially by Charles, interspersed through the service, relieved the preacher, and subdued the audience.

We can enter into the surprize of those on whom, after a long season of heartless observances, religion at length burst with the interest of a new discovery, and the intensity of strong feeling.

"Twelve years ago," says one, "I was going over Gulvan downs, and I saw many people together, and I asked what was the matter? They told me a man was going to preach; and I said, To be sure, it is some 'mazed man. But when I saw you, I said this is no 'mazed man. You preached on God's raising the dry bones, and from that time I could never rest, till God was pleased to breathe on me and raise my dead soul."

Women, wretched and despairing, turned into the Foundry, heard the sermon and were comforted. Others, abandoned to vice, hardened by a life of shame, came from listless curiosity, were struck to the heart and reclaimed. The vilest scum of Moorfields, the rudest barbarians of Kingswood listened and were subdued.

Whatever we are pleased to think of the teachers or their theology, the results of the teaching are undeniable. Drunkards sobered—the vicious reclaimed—the selfish made generous—the churl, liberal—the undutiful, obedient—the stern, gentle—the self-willed, docile, these results, springing up in abundance among colliers, miners, mechanics and tradesmen, attest the earnestness of the preacher, and the mastery of truth.

The only fault that could be charged against the Methodists, by their bitterest enemies, was, that they rose early, pretended to be better than others; sung psalms, and prayed from morning to night.* "Beside," said

* Southey ii. p. 55.

† Ibid. p. 20.

an old man, with comical gravity, "a'nt please your worship, they have converted my wife. Till she went among them, she had such a tongue! and now she is as quiet as a lamb." Very sensibly, and with laudable discretion, the magistrate bade them carry back the preachers, "to convert all the scolds in the town." "And what would your worship advise us to do?" "Go home, and be quiet."

The effects of Methodism were shewn in the character of those who were its earliest converts; and who, from their zeal and qualities, became its teachers.

It is worth while to mention a few of them, as their story illustrates both the history and the doctrines of Methodism.

We must not wonder to find them drawn chiefly from the humble class of society. John Oliver was the son of a Stockport tradesman; John Pawson the son of a Yorkshire farmer. Mather was the son of a baker at Brechin, and for some time united the work of a journeyman baker with that of a preacher. Thomas Oliver was a dissipated tradesman from Shrewsbury, who became, under the influence of Methodism, a reclaimed and honest man; and, broken in health, first by dissipation and then by anxiety, he recovered strength in the active life of a preacher: rode his faithful horse, which he bought for £5, over a circuit which comprised a range of 300 miles in extent, every six weeks; and in twenty-five years had travelled 100,000 miles.

Some passed through stranger fortunes to the work in which they found their rest. John Haines was a native of Dorsetshire—born at Shaftesbury. Having tried first gardening, and then button-making, alternating between dissipation and remorse, he sought refuge for his disordered habits, in the army. A sermon of Charles Wesley's induced him to open his feelings to that gentle adviser. Charles Wesley's advice was judicious; and Haines, acting on this, cultivated, during the campaign in Flanders, feelings of devotion; and though these were interrupted by eccentric outbreaks, he held on a course of life, which was on the whole upright and pure. Relapse into old habits ensued; and for seven years he groaned under remorse. Still, during this time, he continued to exhort his comrades to religion; and, on his return to England, he obtained his discharge. He was received by Wesley as a preacher, and he continued for years to preach and to suffer, to proclaim to others the tidings of the Gospel which he could not apply to himself. It was only after a fiery probation of suffering and sorrow, that he obtained the peace of religion; and from this time, from 1766 till 1788, he continued, assiduously and without reproach, the work of a preacher.

One of the disciples of this strange teacher was a worthless and sullen soldier, Staniforth, who had served with him in the ranks. He was attracted to Haines's preaching by the persuasions of another of his converts,

and by that preaching he was reclaimed. The drunken vagabond became sober; and, on his return to England, settled as a Methodist preacher at Deptford. His experience, as given us in his sixty-third year, presents a remarkable contrast to the habits of his lawless manhood. He followed steadily the trade which supported him, but gave up every spare moment of his time to reading and prayer. His evenings were spent in preaching, in which he was eminently successful; and his day of virtuous labour was peacefully closed in reading the Bible to his family, and in prayer. He tells us, in an advanced age, that of this life he was not weary,—that its enjoyments grew upon him, that the surrender of our wills and life to God, and affection for man, present a state of mind that brings its own reward, and that the faith which leads to the love of God, makes him, who has it, happy.

George Story, a native of Yorkshire, pursued a life different from that of Staniforth. His education had been careful—his parents religious—his early impressions deep. The shop of a bookbinder, to whom he was apprenticed, and the printing-office, in which he worked, fed his taste for books, and increased the thirst for knowledge which early characterized him. His habits of business were prompt, and through his application, he soon had leisure at command. In botany at one time, then in gardening, next in angling, he spent his leisure; but when these lost their interest,

he tried more exciting amusements. When these in turn became vapid, he had recourse to reading; and, as infidel publications fell in his way, he ran through them, first to taste, and then to imbibe their poison. Remaining dissatisfied, though he had every thing at command, money, occupation, youth, and health, he felt himself wretched: mirth he tried, and company, but the heart rung hollow under both. At this time, while abridging the life of Eugene Aram, he was struck with his attainments, and resolved to emulate them, but, reflecting on his miserable end, he saw, with the Hebrew monarch, the folly of wisdom. At length the unreality of present things broke upon his mind, and as the shadows of time passed away, the grander thought of a God presented itself. In this temper he was drawn to visit the Methodists, who had formed a society in his village, where his mother, to whom he was fondly attached, had joined them. Their notions repelled him, and their arguments failed to convince him; but a chance question, shot at him by an ignorant woman in the meeting, struck his heart. He was about to withdraw, when she asked him earnestly, if he was happy; and when he answered, No, she bade him seek in God the happiness he desired. He sought it; and found it, not in strong emotion, but in a quiet trust, which never forsook him; and his life, thus changed in its character, flowed on in an even

course of regular employment. In the duties of a preacher, he found the happiness which he sought.

The mind of John Nelson was of a stronger texture, and passed through a sterner discipline. His earthly lot was happy—a mason—in full employment, with a peaceful home, of honest labour, and domestic love. But he learned that these outward things did not bring peace. At the age of thirty, he was so wretched, under the restless search for happiness, and the pressure of his convictions, that he said he would rather be strangled than spend thirty more years like the last. He sought comfort in every sect, and from every teacher. In the church first, then among Dissenters, then among the Quakers, and then the Romanists; he next heard Whitefield, with interest, but without conviction. About this time he fell in with John Wesley, whose words in one of his sermons went to his heart. “This man,” he said to himself, “can tell the secrets of my heart; he hath not left me there, for he hath shewed the remedy, even the blood of Jesus.” He underwent, with the composure of a strong-minded man, the taunts and ridicule of his friends. These at length ceased. Some of them were struck by his earnestness; some by his words,—all by his constancy. Returning to his native town, Birstall, he began to instruct his neighbours and friends: in his house, standing at his door, during his dinner-hour, or in the evening. When Wesley arrived at Birstall, he found a preacher and a large

gregation. As Nelson extended his labours, he attracted the notice of the magistrates, who arrested him, and sent him into the army. His conduct there was irreproachable; and, after his discharge, he resumed and continued, till his death, his labours as a preacher, with such respect from all around him, that when he died at Leeds, and his remains were carried to Birstall, they were attended by a dense crowd of mourners, who collected from the neighbourhood, and extended for nearly half a mile, testifying by their silent sorrow, their reverence for the man.

One further case I add, as it brought to Methodism the zeal and fervor of Ireland. Thomas Walsh was the son of a carpenter in the County of Limerick. His parents were Romanists, and he was brought up in the strictest tenets of that faith. At nineteen he opened a school, but was led, in the course of controversy with his brother, who had become a Protestant, to detect the errors of his faith. His devotion had been earnest; it was now directed to God; and, dropping the worship of Saints and Angels, he resorted to Scripture as his rule of life. But, though he had obtained conviction, he had not gained peace.


In the main street of Limerick he saw a crowd gathered, who were listening to a Methodist, who was preaching in the open air. Walsh drew near and heard a sermon on the words, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you

rest." The sermon struck him, and he followed the directions of the preacher. It was some time indeed before peace came, and it was through another Methodist sermon which presented to him in vivid terms the mercy and glory of the Saviour.

"And now," says he, "I felt of a truth that faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. God, and the things of the invisible world, of which I had heard before by the hearing of the ear, appeared now in their true light as substantial realities. Faith gave me to see a reconciled God, and an all-sufficient Saviour."

He was now anxious to give himself to the work of a teacher, and his study of the Scripture, which he read on his knees, was accompanied by a prayer, which the Christian may copy and admire,—“Lord Jesus, I lay my soul at Thy feet, to be taught and governed by Thee. Take the veil from the mystery, shew me the truth as it is in Thyself. Be Thou my sun and star, by day and by night.”

Wesley saw the fervour of the man, and, with his usual tact, appointed him to preach in Irish, a language which, then as now, gains access to the hearts of Irishmen. This access he used with skill. He avoided points of controversial dispute. He dwelt on those realities which belong to the whole family of man. He availed himself of every occasion, in the street, the highway, the hovel or the inn, to proclaim what he felt.



The effect of his unprepared appeals was great on that ardent people. The peasantry, when they frequented the markets, turned aside in crowds, moved by his eloquence, to hear him. They shed silent tears, or sobbed aloud their cries for mercy. Even the beggars, when accosted by him, would fall on their knees, and beat their breasts in anguish under his addresses, while multitudes declared that they would follow him over the world.

Denounced by priests, assailed by mobs, arrested by magistrates, Walsh continued, without shrinking, his course. Wrapt in thought, absorbed in devotion, he moved among men, as a being of another world. The care of the body never occurred to him. His sermons, earnest, vehement, and long; his studies intense, protracted to midnight; his vigils begun at four in the morning,—soon wore out the feeble frame.

At five and twenty he looked like a man of forty, and sunk at thirty, worn out by unremitting labour, but leaving behind among his Irish countrymen a memory which, from the purity and earnestness of his character, singularly impressed that susceptible people.



CHAPTER VII.

THE DOCTRINES.

PERHAPS I ought not to proceed further without noticing the opinions by which the early Methodists were characterized, and the doctrines which they taught. I enter reluctantly on this ground, which would be better occupied by the theologian ; but a sketch of Methodism would be considered imperfect, perhaps inaccurate, if this were omitted. The doctrines of the Methodists have been characterized by strong censure and high praise. Let me endeavour, after a brief sketch of them, to pass upon them an unexaggerated judgment. The views, which had the sanction of Wesley, spread over his followers. It is well therefore to explain Wesley's opinions.

The great topic of his preaching was the necessity of faith for our justification before God, and as the ground of our peace ; but by faith he did not mean the reception of a creed—a string of opinions being in his eyes as valueless as a string of beads ;—he meant the power to feel

the realities of the invisible world, to renew the broken intercourse between the Deity and man in the events and objects of life, to hear God's voice within our hearts, and there to feel His love.

This strange change was, he said, a new creation, issuing from the Creator. Man could not gain or give it. He could only ask it from Him who grants it. By God the change was effected suddenly or by degrees; the light breaking gradually on the eye, or bursting, like the lightning, on the startled sight.

These views were thoroughly practical. They were the growth of Wesley's personal experience. He had long desired to be religious, and striven to become so. He had failed. Ceremonies, observances, alms, efforts, had been employed by him. But they had not brought to his heart the dispositions, nor to his character the power, nor to his spirit the rest which he had sought.

The religion, which he had finally reached, and by which he lived, was of a different sort. It is thus described by Wesley, borrowing the view of it from his Moravian teacher.* He, observing the earnestness of Wesley, and his efforts, had said to him;—"It is not this (contrition &c.) by which you are justified. This is no part of the righteousness, by which you are reconciled unto God. To think that you must be more contrite, more humble, more grieved, more sensible of the weight of sin, before you are justified, is

* Journal, vol. i. p. 111.

to lay your contrition, your grief, your humiliation, for the foundation of your being justified, at least for a part of it. The right foundation is not your contrition,—not your righteousness; nothing of your own, nothing that is wrought in you by the Holy Ghost; it is something without you, the righteousness and the blood of Christ. For this is the word, ‘To him that believeth on God that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.’ See ye not that the foundation is nothing in us? There is no connexion between God and the ungodly. There is no tie to unite them. They have nothing in common. There is nothing, less or more, in the ungodly to join them to God. Works, righteousness, contrition? No, ungodliness only. This then do, if you will lay a right foundation. Go straight to Christ with all your ungodliness,—tell Him, ‘Thou, whose eyes are as a flame of fire searching the heart, seest that I am ungodly. I plead nothing else—therefore bring me to Him that justifieth the ungodly: Let Thy blood be the propitiation for me.’ And this faith lives in the heart, not in the head. The faith of the head, learned from men or books, is nothing worth. It brings neither remission of sins, nor peace with God. Labour then to believe with your whole heart. So shall you have redemption through the blood of Christ. So shall you be cleansed from all sin.”†

* Journal, vol. i. pp. 112, 113.

Wesley himself states the doctrine thus with his usual force of style.* "Stay for nothing;—Why should you? Christ is ready, and He is all you want. He is waiting for you! He is at the door. Whosoever thou art who desirest to be forgiven, first believe. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; and then thou shalt do all things well. Say not, I cannot be accepted yet, because I am not good enough. Who is good enough, who ever was, to merit acceptance at God's hands? Say not, I am not contrite enough, I am not sensible enough of my sins. I know it. I would to God thou wert more sensible of them, more contrite a thousandfold than thou art. But do not stay for this. It may be God will make thee so, not before thou believest, but by believing. It may be thou wilt not weep much, till thou lovest much, because thou hast had much forgiven. Be true then to your principles, and look for this blessing, just as you are, neither better nor worse; as a poor sinner that has nothing to pay, nothing to plead, but that Christ hath died." †

* Southey. ii. p. 175.

† The struggle of the anxious heart, its quest and its peace, are described by Charles Wesley in one of the hymns with which he has enriched his communion, and which, for its beauty, deserves a place in every collection.

Come, O thou Traveller unknown,
Whom still I hold, but cannot see;
My company before is gone,
And I am left alone with Thee:

It was this doctrine boldly and fervently preached
which gave to both the Wesleys their remarkable power,

With thee all night I mean to stay,
And wrestle till the break of day.

I need not tell Thee who *I* am,
My misery and sin declare ;
Thyself hast called me by Thy name,
Look on Thy hands and read it there
But who, I ask Thee, *who* art Thou ?
Tell me Thy name, and tell me now.

In vain Thou strugglest to get free,
I never will let go my hold ;
Art Thou the man that died for me ?
The secret of Thy love unfold ;
Wrestling, I will not let Thee go,
Till I Thy name, Thy nature know.

Wilt Thou not yet to me reveal
Thy new, unutterable name ?
Tell me, I still beseech Thee, tell.
To know it now resolved I am ;
Wrestling, I will not let Thee go,
Till I Thy name and nature know.

What though my shrinking flesh complain
And murmur to contend so long,
I rise superior to my pain ;
When I am weak, then am I strong.
And when my all of strength shall fail,
I shall with the God-man prevail.

Yield to me now, for I am weak,
But confident in self-despair.
Speak to my heart, in blessings speak,
Be conquered by my instant prayer.
Speak, or Thou never hence shalt move,
And tell me if Thy name be Love !

and the effect of this upon the conduct of their disciples was undeniable. Drunkards reformed, the profligate reclaimed, the brutal softened, the restless satisfied, the mourner comforted : these signs followed the progress of Methodism, but they also attest the presence of Christianity, and they establish the affinity of Methodism with the principles of apostolic times.

It is true that the Wesleys engrafted on their teaching, doctrines* which in their later years they modified,† but which in the commencement they pressed with peril-

'Tis love ! 'tis love ! Thou diedst for me !
 I hear Thy whisper in my heart.
 The morning breaks, the shadows flee !
 Pure, universal love Thou art !
 To me, to all, Thy bowels move,
 Thy nature and Thy name is love !

My prayer hath power with God, the grace
 Unspeakable I now receive !
 Through faith I see Thee face to face,
 I see Thee face to face and live !
 In vain I have not wept and strove,
 Thy nature and Thy name is Love.

I know Thee, Saviour, who Thou art,
 Jesus, the feeble sinner's Friend,
 Nor wilt Thou, with the night, depart,
 But stay and love me to the end ;
 Thy mercies never shall remove,
 Thy nature and Thy name is Love !

* See Note at the end of this chapter.

† See the remarkable passage quoted by Southey, Vol. ii. p. 182.

ous enthusiasm. They held that every one, who was a true believer, must have the consciousness of forgiveness;—or, as Wesley expressed it, “that a true faith in Christ is inseparable from a sense of pardon for all past and freedom from all present sins.” If this assurance was avowed, they accepted the man as a believer, if it was doubted, they regarded him as in darkness. The effect of such teaching was soon perceived; many, moved by sympathy, or sanguine of temperament, affected or felt a confidence which their subsequent life belied, while many humble though earnest men were plunged in despondency, or depressed by undeserved discouragement. To the feelings, which such teaching produced, were owing many of those scenes which characterized the outset of Methodism, and which have brought upon it, not unjustly, severe reproach. To these may be traced the outbursts of enthusiasm and physical excitement, which Wesley long regarded as signs of a divine influence. It may appear extraordinary that a mind, so shrewd as John Wesley’s, and of such discernment, should have fallen into these views. But the truth is, there was in his character a singular mixture of acuteness and credulity. When he weighs evidence, tests a narrative, or traces an argument, no one, as his journal proves, exerts a keener insight, or sums up evidence with a fairer hand. But he had a love of the marvellous, and a belief in miraculous departures from the order of nature which, when roused, set his reasoning faculties

to sleep. If any one, whose character he trusted, told him a strange story, he listened to it eagerly and received it with implicit faith. His journal is full of accounts of trances, supernatural recoveries, miraculous sights, marvellous deliverances ; and he finds time to record these, and to ask for further news of them with an insatiable appetite. In this respect his journal wears a motley dress, and, in the midst of serious narratives and pathetic histories, these stories * come up, ever and anon, in the gravest scenes, like the Jester in *Lear*, provoking a smile.

Epilepsy, fits, and madness, he attributed to diabolical agency, and in witchcraft he was a firm believer. But these, the eccentricities of a strong character, were mixed with a breadth and kindliness of spirit which draw us to him.

Turn from these his reveries to the short, shrewd, kind† letters, of which he wrote so many ; we are not surprised to find that John Wesley was a man of many friends. His readiness to sympathize with others, his watchfulness over them, his faithful yet playful affection, are not often to be found in this cold, hard, world. No wonder that these qualities drew men to him.

When we remember how these letters were written, by one who was always in the saddle, in the pulpit, in the council-room, preaching, journeying, adjusting, a

* *Journal*, Vol. ii. pp. 425, 399 ; iii. pp. 140, 141, &c.

† *Ibid.* Vol. viii. pp. 327, 344, 331, 335—338.

universal law-giver, superintendent, and missionary, on whom the care of all the churches, and the management of the complex machinery fell, we perceive how earnest and honest was his friendship.

To him each correspondent seemed a special friend. His health, spirits, prospects, comfort, occupy his thoughts, and he has a prescription* (for he was a great doctor,) and a rule for every imaginable difficulty or disease of every one of his innumerable associates.

True it is, that for whims and follies his character had no room, and that morbid fantasy or narrow bigotry found no echo in that strong mind and large heart.

One of his followers became enamoured of Mystic writers on Religion. Wesley thus disposes of that class of writers:—"This is in reality not an excellence, but a capital defect. I avoid, I am afraid of, whatever is peculiar either in the experience or the language of any one. I desire nothing, I will accept of nothing but the common faith and the common salvation."

Writing to another person he says, "It is undoubtedly our privilege to rejoice evermore with a calm, still, heartfelt joy. Nevertheless this is seldom long at one stay. Many circumstances may cause it to ebb and flow. This therefore is not the essence of religion, which is no other than humble,† gentle, patient, love.

* Letters, Vol. xiii. pp. 43, 93, 94, 105; xii. p. 320, &c.

† This is what he called *perfection*; a phrase unguarded, and which led to much abuse. p. 54.

I do not know whether these are not included in that one word, resignation."

Again to another, "Desire nothing different in nature from love. There is nothing higher in earth or heaven. Whatever Mr.—— speaks of, which seems to be higher, is either natural or preternatural enthusiasm."

"If I have plain Scripture or plain reason for doing a thing, well: I wish to be, in every point, great or small, a Scriptural rational Christian."

Revelations, gifts of tongues, and prophecies, when imagined or affected by any of his disciples, he put down and cast aside without hesitation.* Adherence to duty, devotion† to the work of our station, humility, and patience, he presses as the signs of religion.‡

Orthodoxy, without morality, he could not abide. "Permit me," he says to a clergyman, "Sir, to speak exceeding plainly; are you not an orthodox man? Perhaps there is none more so in the diocese. If it be true that you frequently drink to excess, you may have orthodoxy, but you can have no religion. If when you be in a passion you call your brother "Thou fool," you have no religion at all. If you even curse, and take the name of God in vain, you can have no other religion than that of orthodoxy, a religion of which the devil and his angels may have full as much as you."§

* Vol. xiii. p. 69.

† Journal iii. p. 125.

‡ Ibid. pp. 25, 37, 44, 45, 51; xii. p. 280.

§ Vol. xiii. p. 204.

In fact Wesley's mind was of that texture which fixes on the leading principles of action, and passes by all that is subordinate. His sympathies were wide as mankind, and included those from whom he differed, the Roman Catholic, the heretic,* and the Pagan.

All persons, even if in error, so that they were fervent, he esteemed; mere knowledge of truth he held of little account. "We may die," he says, "without the knowledge of many truths, and yet be carried into Abraham's bosom; but if we die without love what will knowledge avail? Just as much as it avails the devil and his angels. I will not quarrel with you about any opinion, only see that your heart be right towards God, that you know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, that you love your neighbour, and walk as your Master walked, and I desire no more. I am sick of opinions; I am weary to bear them. My soul loathes this frothy food. Give me solid and substantial religion: Give me an humble, gentle love of God and man; a man full of mercy and good faith, without partiality and without hypocrisy: a man laying himself out in the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labour of love. Let my soul be with these Christians wheresoever they are."†

This breadth and kindliness of temper must always be

* Pelagius, Servetus, and Firmin, he speaks of with affection. Works, Vol. xiii. p. 200.

† Southey, ii. p. 192.

remembered when we trace the features of Methodism.* The doctrines of Assurance and Perfection were Wesley's errors, held by him with his usual tenacity, and widely adopted on his authority. These have to be reckoned up against Methodism. But on the other side must be set the bold and clear statement of truth which the preaching of the Wesleys contained.

It is seldom that men who recover a great truth do not run into excess. Perhaps the English Reformation is the solitary exception. Even Lutheranism, to which we owe so much, fell into error; and Quakerism, which gave us back another truth, also went astray. Still in passing judgment on Methodism we may recal the words of one, whose judgment was without bias, that, of all the collective systems of religion which have succeeded each other for ten centuries,† "providentially suited to the existing circumstances, and all answering a useful purpose, of these I am inclined to think, John Wesley's has been the very best."

* The doctrine of perfection was one of Wesley's fantasies. The old Moravian, Spangenberg, had conclusively disposed of it, (Southey, i. p. 351.) "There is no higher state than that I have described. You are in a very dangerous error. You know not your own hearts. You fancy your corruptions are taken away, whereas they are only covered. Inward corruption never can be taken away till our bodies are in the dust." Or, as Böehler expressed it, "Sin will and must always remain in the soul. The old man will remain till death. The old nature is like an old tooth: you may break off one bit, and another, and another; but you can never get it all away. The stump will stay as long as you live, and sometimes will ache too."

† Alexander Knox's Remains, i. p. 77.

He adds,* "I must express my persuasion, that, in the very pith and marrow of Mr. Wesley's views, and in these matters which through life he most prized, most dwelt upon, and lay nearest his heart, there is not one of his own nominal followers, who agrees with him more identically than I do."

The marrow of his own teaching John Wesley has given us in two sentences.† "That Religion is an inward principle, deliverance from sin, a recovery of the divine nature, the renewal of the soul in righteousness and true holiness. And this only to be had by faith, for we cannot serve God unless we love him, nor love him unless we know him."

NOTE.

The necessity of a sudden and distinct assurance of pardon is dwelt upon by both the Wesleys. They looked for this in their own case, and the mode in which Charles Wesley found it, by opening passages of Scripture at hazard, and by the voice of a female, are more characteristic of his earnestness, than of his judgment.‡ In John Wesley's Journal we find similar views. He represents his faith, as a Christian, to have come suddenly upon him, with the emotions which arose under an impressive discourse.§

1. The erroneousness of both their statements appears from

* Knox's Remains, i. p. 71.

† Works, Vol. viii. p. 344.

‡ See Jackson's Life, pp. 139—135. C. Wesley's Journal, pp. 90—94.

§ Jackson's Life of C. Wesley, p. 137.

their own Journals. Long before the epoch which each fixes as that of his decisive change, he was feeling and acting as a Christian. Charles Wesley records that "he found much comfort both in prayer and in the Word ; my eyes being opened more and more to discern and lay hold on the promises." * Again ; " I experienced the power of Christ rescuing me in temptation." " From this time I endeavoured to ground as many of our friends as came, in this fundamental truth,—salvation by faith alone, a faith which works by love." " In the approach of a temptation, I looked up to Christ, and confessed my helplessness. The temptation was immediately beat down, and continually kept off by a power not my own." Yet all this, according to him, was while he did not believe, and was plunged in darkness.

2. John Wesley derived his views from the Moravians, it being a part of his character,—a curious part of it,—to receive implicitly any statement made to him by those of whose known piety he was convinced. Several of the Moravians had testified, of their own personal experience, that " a true living faith in Christ is inseparable *from a sense of pardon for all past, and freedom from all present sins.*" † Yet Wesley records the experience of other Moravians, equally sincere and pious, who went on for years without any assurance of pardon, yet manifestly and consciously believing in Christ, hoping and praying.‡ This might have deterred him from adopting so hazardous a doctrine.

The Moravian leader summed up the case well : §—" Justification is the forgiveness of sins. The moment a man flies to Christ, he is justified, but may not know he is justified till long after. For the assurance of it is distinct from justification itself, but others may know he is justified by his

* Journal, p. 87.

† Ibid. Vol. i. p. 96.

‡ Ibid. pp. 121—123.

§ Count Zinzendorf.

power over sin, his seriousness," &c.* And Wesley himself, in later life, qualified his views—"Possibly some may be in the favor of God, and yet go mourning all the day long. *Therefore I have not for many years thought a consciousness of acceptance to be essential to justifying faith.*" †

3. But in the earlier stage of his active life, and in that of his brother, the doctrine of the instant impression of pardon was preached without reserve.‡ How this was received and abused, the cases of Hall,—of Mr. C.,—of the girl at Stockport,—and of many others, shew. In fact, both the Wesleys soon discovered, that, if a small proportion of their original converts adhered to their profession, it was all they could look for.§

And it was not always the most confident who were most to be relied on. Emotion, sympathy, temperament, determined many. Charles Wesley thus sums up his later experience,||—"We have certainly been too rash and hasty in allowing persons for believers on their own testimony; nay, and even persuading them into a false opinion of themselves. . . . I wrote thus to a son in the Gospel. 'Be not ever sure that so many are justified. By their fruits you shall know them. You will see reason to be more and

* Journal, p. 104.

† Wesley says, Vol. xii. . 56. "I believe it (Christian faith) is generally given in an instant. I do not deny that God imperceptibly works on some, or gradually increases assurance of his love, but I am equally certain he works on others a full assurance thereof in one moment."

‡ C. Wesley's Journal, Vol. i. pp. 88, 100, 104, 105, 108, 110—112, 114, 120, 127, 128. Addison's Life, pp. 136, 142, 334. Journal, Vol. ii. pp. 40, 454, 375, 486; Vol. i. pp. 378, 268, 182. C. Wesley's Journal, Vol. i. p. 88.

§ Short History of Wesley's Works, Vol. xiii. p. 320.

|| Jackson's Life, i. pp. 334, 335.

more deliberate in the judgments you pass on souls. Wait for their conversation.'

4. In truth the experience of all, whom Methodism accepts as its chiefs, proves, if proof were wanting, the unsoundness of that doctrine of *sudden assurance of pardon*, which Wesley gave as the type of the Christian life. No doubt there are such cases, to be accepted, where they occur, for our instruction. But this was not the mental history of Charles or John Wesley, who passed through years of anxiety before they attained peace. It was not the experience of the preachers of Methodism, whom I have cited as Wesley's first companions; all of whom, except one, were for a length of time anxious inquirers after truth. And if such was *their* experience, we may well use it to correct the hazardous teaching which brought great scandal on Methodism,* and which led to many of the evils, to be traced in its early history.

* Wesley's Works, Vol. xiii. pp. 349, 355, 334, 337, 338, 327.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RELATION OF METHODISM TO THE CHURCH.

It is necessary to distinguish between the early position of Methodism, and that which it occupied in its later stages. Its first aspect towards the church was friendly. It had no design of secession. Its leading doctrine, on which was based its influence, was the doctrine of the Church of England. The grand idea of the reconciliation of man by his faith in the averments of God, and by trust in his redeeming love, is that which characterizes the Ritual and Articles of the Church of England, and severs our Church by an impassable chasm from the church of Rome. Wesley found this truth fixed in the Articles of his church.* The clergy of the church

* It is satisfactory to find this fact admitted by clergymen of the high Church party. See Mr. Suckling's *Life*, pp. 150, 228. He says:—

“The doctrinal differences *on justification* separate us from the Church of Rome. Get clear views of the doctrine of justification, *as taught by our Church*, and then perhaps you may use the (Romish) devotional books without danger. Study St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans with prayer.”

“Of the error of doctrine, what is the root? In my humble opinion, it is *in the doctrine of justification*.”

indeed, had in a great measure abandoned it, and were unconscious of it: but there it was; and, when a bold hand drew it forth, it reappeared and had its weight. It was indeed met and scouted as a novelty; antinomian, immoral, fanatical. It did, however, what other preachers had failed to do. It abashed vice, restored morality, and drew men to church; crowds of new faces, never before seen, appeared there; strangers knelt for the first time at the Sacrament; a new respect for religion spread; new tastes shewed themselves; rogues became honest; the churl became liberal; the hard-hearted, compassionate. These things struck the observer. If this was fanaticism, it seemed to them of a right good sort. The philosopher Dr. Johnson, the learned Bishop Gibson,* were surprized. Secker's caution was puzzled: Archbishop Potter was moved; the more simple began to praise.

What were these doctrines? men enquired, which seemed to find a warrant, not in Scripture alone, about which men differed, but in the Articles of the church, which all professed to hold. This at least became increasingly evident, that the Wesleys' attachment to their church was not simulated but sincere.

They desired indeed to unite all, who would live according to the rules of piety; but they sought to effect this through the church and her ordinances.

* Journal, Vol. xii. p. 53; xiii. p. 255. Charles Wesley's Life, Vol. vi. p. 176.

It is well to give a few examples of Wesley's opinions on this point.

"Having had an opportunity," John Wesley writes to Sir Harry Trelawny, "of seeing several of the churches abroad, and having deeply considered the several sects of Dissenters at home, I am fully convinced that our own church, with all her blunders, is nearer the scriptural plan, than any other in Europe." *

He brings to a plain issue his difference with Dissenters.

"Are we not Dissenters?" he says. "No, although we call sinners to repentance in all places of God's dominion; and although we frequently use extempore prayer, and unite together in a religious society, yet we are not Dissenters in the only sense which our law acknowledges, namely, those who renounce the services of the church; we do not, we dare not, separate from it. We are not seceders, nor do we bear any resemblance to them. We set out upon quite opposite principles; the seceders laid the very foundation of their work in judging and condemning others; we laid the foundation of our work in judging and condemning ourselves. They begin everywhere with shewing their hearers how fallen the church and ministers are, we begin everywhere with shewing our hearers how fallen they are themselves." †

* Moore's Life, Vol. ii. p. 282.

† Conversation, June 1744. Moore's Life, Vol. ii. pp. 41—57.

Nothing ever falls from him, even in his familiar letters, which betrays a feeling of hostility to the church. He was abused by the clergy; often misunderstood by the bishops; but his tone is always respectful and kind. If he points out faults, they are those of individuals; no attack against the clergy or the episcopate falls from him; on the contrary, when one of his disciples, Mr. Asbury, took, in America, the name of Bishop, he writes:—"How can you—how dare you suffer yourself to be called a Bishop. I shudder—I start at the very thought. Men may call me a knave, or a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content; but they shall never, with my consent, call me a Bishop." *

In one of his letters he says:—

"You cannot be too zealous for the poor Church of England. I commend sister Percival for having her child baptized there, and for returning her public thanks. By all means, go to church as often as you can, and exhort all Methodists so to do. They, that are enemies of the church, are enemies to me. They, that leave the church, leave us." †

So far from undervaluing the church's ordinances, he holds them to be the best aids to practical piety.

"I myself," he says, in one of the outpourings of his familiar confidence, "find more life in the church prayers than in any formal extemporary prayers of

* Works, Vol. xiii. pp. 33, 107.

† See also p. 216, his view of the Church and clergy.

Dissenters. Nay, I find more profit in sermons on either good tempers or good works, than in what are called Gospel sermons. That term has now become a mere cant word : I wish none of our society would use it. It has no determinate meaning.”*

To those who assailed the church prayers, he says:—

“The prayers of the church are not chaff; they are substantial food for any who are alive to God. The Lord’s Supper is not chaff, but pure and wholesome for all who receive it with upright hearts. Yea, in almost all the sermons we hear there, we hear many good and important truths.”†

“I never had any design of separating from the church. I have no such design now. I do not believe the Methodists in general design it, when I am no more seen. I do, and will do, all that is in my power to prevent such an event.‡ . . I declare, once more, that I live and die a member of the Church of England; and that none, who regard my judgment or advice, will ever separate from it.”§

The mission of Methodism, as he truly appreciated it, was not to lure away members from the body of the church, but to infuse into her the principles of an invigorating life. “God has raised us,” he says, “as living witnesses, in and to every party, of that Christianity which we preach, which is hereby demonstrated

* Vol. xiii. p. 54.

† Ibid. p. 217.

‡ Ibid. p. 259.

§ Quote also C. Wealey, Vol. xiii. p. 219.

to be a real thing, and visibly held out to all the world.”* “This is a new thing in the world, this is the peculiar glory of the people called Methodists; in spite of all manner of temptations, they will not separate from the Church. What many so earnestly covet they abhor. They will not be a distinct body. The Methodists will not separate from the Church, although continually reproached for doing it; although it would free them from abundance of inconveniences, and make their path much smoother and easier; although many of their friends earnestly advise and their enemies provoke them to it; the clergy in particular, most of whom, far from thanking them for continuing in the Church, use all the means in their power, fair and unfair, to drive them out of it.”

“I reminded them that we were a part of the church of England, whom God had raised up, not only to save our own souls, but to enliven our neighbours, those of the church in particular. . . . Our peculiar glory was, not to form any new sect, but, abiding in our own church, to do all men all the good we possibly could.”†

Those who lived with Wesley, and watched him the most closely, and the most learned dignitaries of the Church, were the first to do him justice. One of the Irish bishops hastened to ordain for him helpers, to

* Letters, Vol. xiii. p. 216.

† Vol. xiii. p. 252.

ease his labours. Bishop Gibson, who had been hostile, became friendly. Secker's doubts were satisfied. Archbishop Potter refused to take any step which might drive such men out of the church; and the learned Lowth, with the warmth of a gentle heart, threw away the claims of rank, in order to place himself at John Wesley's side as an honoured father in the Church.*

Amongst the clergy, great changes took place. At the outset of Wesley's labours, not a dozen clergymen agreed with him. Those, who opened their pulpits, did so from personal kindness. In the middle of his labours fifty was the number computed to sympathize with him. Before their close, the assenting clergy were reckoned at 500.†

The change in the social condition of England was still more decisive. The most lawless districts were civilized. The rudest of the population were reformed. New sentiments began to be avowed. The licentiousness of fiction, the coarseness of poetry gave way to a new order of writers, who owed, and some of them traced, their change to the altered tone of practical piety. In Parliament a new spirit of independence appeared. Integrity was esteemed: plans of philanthropy were discussed. At length, the movement spreading, associations for the relief of suffering or ignorance began.

* Wesley's Works, Vol. xii. p. 53; xiii. p. 255. C. Wesley's Life, Vol. i. p. 176.

† See testimony of Mr. Romaine, Jay's Life, p. 226.

Then arose the labours of John Howard ; and the efforts of Wilberforce : Societies for the development of religion ; hospitals for disease ; efforts for education ; schemes for the amelioration of the poor.

This great change has continued down to our day, and is now advancing at an augmented pace.

But whatever be its greatness, or its ultimate issues, let it not be forgotten that they took their rise in the impulse which Methodism impressed upon England. To the work of the Methodists, the patriot and the Christian are therefore deeply indebted.

CHAPTER IX.

THE HISTORY RENEWED.

BUT we return from this notice of Methodism to the story of its founders.


In 1753 John Wesley had passed his fiftieth year. He had married in 1751 a widow, but his marriage was not fortunate. The lady was fond of attention and ease. John Wesley was busy and constantly in journeys. After much murmuring, jealousies, and illnatured attacks, which Wesley bore with great equanimity, Mrs. Wesley separated from her husband, and carried into solitude her animosities and whims. The labours of Wesley were continued : incessant journeys, numberless cares, the work of preaching thrice a day, of organizing and purging his new societies, filled up every moment of his busy life.

Now we have him beginning his spring work by preaching in wind and rain in Gloucestershire, riding "through heavy rain and almost impassable roads" to Evesham, and on to Birmingham "a barren, dry, un-

comfortable place." Then preaching at Wednesbury, prescribing for a poor woman and for a man with an ague, at the wayside inn at which he baited beyond Lichfield, preaching in Barton Forge in the morning, turning aside to give an early morning sermon at Ashbourne, then at Hayfield in a private house. In Manchester he is assailed by a mob; at Warrington he preaches to a large congregation; at Liverpool, whose rising population he notices, he preaches in a great meeting-house: at Bolton to a "little flock,"—to multitudes on the side of a hill at Todmorden, on the mountain brow at Heptonstall, twice in a meadow at Ewood, then, curing, as he passes, a poor old man, he preaches repeatedly on his way to Bradford. At Bristol he meets his brother, goes through the books and pamphlets which had been written in defence of separation from the Church, makes up his own mind, and then passes on to preside at the Conference. At Leeds the delicate question of secession is discussed: and, Wesley, allowing vent to the opinions opposed to his own, checking his brother's impatience, hearing and answering objections, meeting doubts, and allaying scruples, traced the course of duty, and stopped a formidable schism.

No sooner set free from this task, he resumes his sermons. We hear of him at North-Allerton, then at Newcastle, riding and musing on the Roman Wall, preaching at Sunderland, Northfleet, and Alnwick, next at Durham, investigating a natural wonder in the

hills of Yorkshire, cheering his little society at Thirsk, preaching twice to a large audience at York, filling up the interstices of the Sunday with one service at the Minster, and another in a parish church; then repairing to Epworth, he preaches in a meadow at Misterton, at night at Clayworth, and then at Rotherham and Sheffield. Soon after he is comforting and rebuking an erring friend, then he suggests to 1800 persons, crowded to hear him in Spitalfields, to enter into a solemn covenant of piety and zeal. Next he starts off to Cornwall, preaching at each halting-place on his way through Berkshire and Dorsetshire. Gwennap, Penrhyn, Falmouth, and Helstone, once noisy with a turbulent rabble, give him welcome. Sermons in meeting-houses, in town-halls, in the fields, mark his career, diversified with visits to curious caves and descents to mines; and on his adventurous labours the autumn closes at Bristol. Through Bath and Reading he works his way to winter quarters in London, preaching as he goes. But the campaigner breaks out of his London camp from time to time in the bleak months of November and December, to give now a sermon at Leigh, reading it by moonlight, one at Maldon, one at Tonbridge Wells, at Canterbury and at Dover; now sermons at Wandsworth and Lewisham, now a preaching excursion to Suffolk, one to Cambridge, a ride to Bedford to confirm a solitary waverer, a ride to Bristol to encourage a large society, a journey to another place to restore a society



which Dissenters had led astray, and an excursion to Kingswood to watch over his cherished school.

But his rest in winter quarters in London was the work of a hard day-labourer. Now he writes an address to the Clergy, answers attacks on the Methodists, indites letters to gentlemen in Bristol and to Editors of newspapers, replies to attacks of Dissenters, and prepares volumes of sermons for the press.

Preaching incessantly in the Foundry, in Spitalfields, and Wapping, visiting the classes, reading with the preachers books on Philosophy and theology, devouring, in his leisure moments, books of travels, history, poetry, and science, Rollin, histories of Persia and Corsica, memoirs of the House of Brandenburg, books of natural history, and books on Hebrew Points ; watching over individual converts and students with the vigilance of a guardian ; encouraging men of piety in all parts of the world, and keeping up a large correspondence ; applying his electric machine to crowds of sick poor, restraining some of his preachers, stimulating others, watching over his societies, some of which leant to Mysticism, others to Antinomianism, some were tampered with by Quakers, others by Anabaptists.

But no sooner does the bleak month of March bring dry weather, than the indefatigable Wesley takes the field. Off on horseback to Bedford, he preaches, deals with a wavering disciple, is asked to dine with the Judge of the Assizes, but has no time to

stop. Off in piercing cold to Stilton ; off again in sleet to Stamford, through all manner of obstacles to keep a preaching appointment at Epworth, he reaches this "after travelling more than ninety miles," little more tired than when he started. Then he changes the scene of his labours ; in Ireland he organizes societies, hears disputants, composes disputes, sees all sorts of persons, reads, as he rides, all sorts of books, observes every thing worth noticing, and records marvellous stories. There he spends four months, and, preaching to the last moment on Irish soil, he resumes his English work at Liverpool and Bristol.

At times indeed this iron frame gave way. His worst illness was in 1753. Then fever and dysentery came on, cough and pain in the chest succeeded, and at every rally he resumed his riding and preaching. His bodily strength at last yielded. His brother and his friends believed him to be dying. He himself was of the same mind,* drew up his own epitaph, and noted in it that, in pursuance of the resolution on which he had acted, he did not leave more than ten pounds behind him. A month later (Dec. 1753,) his brother saw him, and though he was then somewhat better, Charles stated his impression that his brother could not recover,† "being far gone in a galloping consumption, just as my elder brother was at his age." But the Hot Wells of Bristol and rest were the instruments of his restoration,

* Journal, Vol. ii. pp. 294, 225.

† C. Wesley's Life, ii. p. 27.

though his season of repose was occupied in preparing several works for the press, among others his commentary on the New Testament, to which he devoted much time.

Had he been then removed, Methodism would probably have gone to pieces. It was distracted by differences of opinion ; one party advocated separation from the Church ; the other, at whose head was Charles Wesley, adhered to the Church. The matter was brought to issue in the Conference at Leeds in 1755, and the schism was avoided by Wesley's tact, influence, and skill in argument. Charles had none of these qualities. He was eager and impulsive, pressed his own opinions, and made little allowance for those of others. His correspondence with Mr. Grimshawe shews how widely the two parties were opposed. It was the tact of John Wesley alone which avoided a schism.

It would be a mistake however to suppose, that, though John Wesley and his brother differed in character, they differed in opinion. Charles pressed, more impatiently than his brother, his adherence to the discipline of his church ; but neither of them were inclined to give up the style of preaching which they held to be the great instrument of practical reformation. John Wesley has stated in a few words, written in 1755, his difficulties and decision.* "The good Bishop of London has excommunicated Mr. Gardener for preaching without a licence. It is probable the point will now

* Charles Wesley's Life, ii. p. 86.

be determined concerning the church. For, if we must either dissent or be silent, actum est. We have no time to trifle."

The idea which governed his mind was always the same.* "I am not afraid to lay open what have been the inmost thoughts of my heart. I have thought I am a creature of a day, passing through life as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit come from God and returning to God, just hovering over the great gulf, till a few moments hence I am no more seen—I drop into an unchangeable eternity. I want to know one thing, the way to Heaven, how to land safe on that happy shore. God Himself has condescended to teach the way; for this very end He came from heaven; He has written it down in a book. Oh! give me that book! I have it—here is knowledge enough for me. Here then I am, far from the busy ways of men; I sit down alone, only God is here. In His presence I open, I read His book, for this end, to find the way to heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read? Does anything appear dark or intricate? I lift up my heart to the Father of lights. Lord, is it not thy word? "If any man ask wisdom, let him ask of God." Thou hast said, if any be willing to do Thy will, he shall know. I am willing to do, let me know Thy will. I then search after and consider parallel passages of Scripture. I meditate thereon with all the attention

* Wesley's Works, Vol. v. p. 2.

and earnestness of which my mind is capable. What I thus learn, that I teach."

He was bent on good being done—and his rules and polity had this end in view. "Methodism," he says, "is only scriptural religion, guarded by a few prudential regulations."

So that the good was done, he was content.* "This morning Dr. Tisdale shewed me a paper which the Archbishop (of Dublin) had just sent to each of his clergy; entreating them to erect a society for the distribution of books among the poor. Thanks be to God for this. Whether we or they, it is all one, so God be known, loved, and obeyed."

But the work must be done, and he would force his way over the thickest hedge of order, that he might secure it. With this singleness of aim there was a fearless decision, the courage which belongs to strong minds, and the promptitude which gives them power in action.

We have spoken of his indifference to attacks. The storm of passion troubled him as little as the storm of the elements.† While the mob were tossing mud or stones, he was planning how to quell the riot, that he might preach to the rioters. Take a few examples of his firmness.

He bought ground for a meeting-house at Newcastle.

* Journal, Vol. ii. p. 417.

† See a specimen of his composure on hearing this. Journal, iii. p. 78.

The seller tried to be off his bargain. "Sir," he writes, "I am surprised—you give it under your hand, that you will put me in possession of a piece of ground, specified in an article between us, in fifteen days time. Three months are passed, and that article is not fulfilled—and now you say, you cannot conceive what I mean by troubling you. I mean to have that article fulfilled. I think my meaning is very plain.

I am, Sir, your humble servant,
JOHN WESLEY."

An impostor had collected money, under the guise of a Methodist preacher. Wesley inserts this advertisement.*

"Whereas one Thomas Mann, alias Smith, has lately appeared in Cumberland and other parts of England, preaching (as he calls it), in a clergyman's habit, and then collecting money of his hearers; this is to certify whom it may concern, that the said Mann is no clergyman, but a cheat and impostor, and that no preacher in connection with me asks money of any one.

JOHN WESLEY."

A dispute arose about the meeting-house † at Bristol. The Trustees claimed the right of appointing preachers, at least after Wesley's death. He would not hear of this for a moment, and his short letter settles the

* Journal, ii. p. 103.

† This meeting-house has been again the subject of litigation in 1854.

question in a few words,* His societies he kept strictly in hand ; they must go right, or be put right—mended or ended. Members must obey him or go.†

So also he ruled his preachers. They were sons—but the father must be obeyed. To him they brought their doubts. From Wigan one of his preachers writes, puzzled whether to go or stay. He laid his case before Wesley. The next post brought the answer in three lines. “Considering the love of the people for you, and your usefulness, I judge that Providence clearly calls you to remain at Wigan.” Take an opposite case. McNab rebelled at Bath, defied Wesley, and tried to seduce the Society. Wesley hastened to Bath, called together the Society, read the twelfth rule, which was, “Above all, you are to preach when and where I appoint,” expelled McNab, and withdrew.

No doubt Wesley’s power was enormous, and we may ask also, how it came to pass that men submitted to it. It was not his talent that cowed them, nor his force of will, but his rare disinterestedness. He had faults like other men, and he was not without his weaknesses—but his character was of transparent clearness ; on the purity of his motives there did not light through his long life, even from the foulest breath, one speck of stain. He was often attacked. The jealousy of his wife raised scandalous reports against him. They were circulated

* Vol. xiii. pp. 262, 263.

† See the case of Norwich, xiii. p. 341.

eagerly,—they were paraded in newspapers ; they were laid hold of by his enemies,* who had already lampooned the Methodist leader through the press and on the stage. Charles Wesley was alarmed ; he hurried to his brother, who was about to take an excursion with his niece to Canterbury and Dover, and entreated him to defer his journey, and expose the calumnies. With most men his appeal would have had weight. It had none with Wesley. “ Brother, when I devoted to God my ease, my time, my life, did I except my reputation ? No. Tell Sally I will take her to Canterbury to-morrow.”

But the purity of his character was his best defence. It was clear like a fountain, clear to the bottom. Those, who disliked him, acknowledged this.† His disciples felt that, if he exercised great authority, it was for their good. If his power was paternal, so was his affection.

Large sums passed through his hands. Preachers, stewards, were nominated by him. All the chapels of the Society depended on him to name their preachers. He placed and displaced every captain in the ranks of his large army ; yet all felt that these great powers were a burden to him, not a gain. He bore them, but he drew nothing from them—neither gain, nor pleasure through the sense of power. Whatever wealth he had, he got by his own efforts. His head and hands earned it.

* C. Wesley's Life, ii. p. 283.

See testimony of Dr. Howell's, a high Calvinist. C. Wesley's Life ii. p. 281.

He gained it by His writings;—but wealth he trod under foot. “Food and raiment I have. I have a place where to lay my head. I have what is needful for life and godliness. And I apprehend this is all the world can afford. The King of the earth can give me no more. For as to gold and silver, I count it dung and dross: I trample it under my feet. I seek it not; I only fear lest any of it should cleave to me, or I should not be able to shake it off, before my spirit returns to God. Hear ye this, all you who have discovered the treasures which I am to leave behind me. If I leave behind me ten pounds (above my debts and my books, or what may happen to be owing on account of them), you and all mankind bear witness against me, that I lived and died a thief and a robber.”

It was the conviction of this singleness of motive, conveyed by all his acts, that gave John Wesley his power. He had the energy, tact, and talent to use it—but the source of his power was in his character.

* Works, viii. p. 38.


CHAPTER X.

THE PROGRESS OF METHODISM.

METHODISM spread under John Wesley's exertions from 1738 to 1784, extended to our Colonies, and reached a high position in the West Indies and North America.

In the latter, Whitefield's labours had produced an immense effect. Crowds had heard him and had been awakened. In New York the first effort to establish Methodist societies was made by an Irishman, who had been a local preacher in Ireland. In 1768 the first society was formed there. This was succeeded by one in Philadelphia. From Pennsylvania applications for preachers reached Wesley; followed by a petition from Charlestown. Two preachers, in 1769, went from the Conference in England, and these were followed by four others in 1771 and 1773. They labored in Maryland, Virginia, and New York, and in 1773 the Methodists numbered one thousand members.

But the revolution came, and on its causes and issues Wesley had expressed himself strongly. This had the



effect of making the Methodist preachers so unpopular, that they fled, leaving only one preacher behind them, less obnoxious, because less known. Methodism was however kept up by preachers of American birth, and, in 1777, notwithstanding these discouragements, it numbered seven thousand members. On the resignation of the English clergy, and the break-up of the Episcopal Church, the Methodists, deprived of ordinances, and rejected by Dissenters, found themselves involved in serious difficulties. If ordination continued to be withheld from their preachers, it appeared that they would soon be deprived both of ordinances and pastors. The Methodist members applied therefore to Mr. Asbury, the only clergyman who remained to them, to ordain ministers for them. Asbury demurred, and laid the case before Wesley. But the impatience of the body anticipated and constrained his decision. The members in America took the matter into their own hands; selected and ordained some of their brethren. The only way to induce them to stop these irregular proceedings, was to open a legitimate channel of supply; and Wesley, seeing the necessity, made up his mind. Arguing,* that Bishops and Presbyters are

* His actions he justified in these words, "I firmly believe that I am a scriptural episcopus as much as any man in England or in Europe; for the uninterrupted succession I know to be a fable, which no man ever did or can prove. But this does in no wise interfere with my remaining in the Church of England; from which I have no more desire to separate than I had fifty years ago."

the same order, he proceeded to appoint Dr. Coke to the functions of a Bishop, while he ordained others as presbyters.

He justified himself thus : Up to this time he had refused to ordain preachers in England, though on applying to the English Bishops to grant them orders he had been refused. "But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are Bishops who have a legal jurisdiction. In America there are none, neither any parish ministers ; so that, for some hundreds of miles together, there is none either to baptize or to administer the Lord's Supper. Here therefore my scruples are at an end ; and I conceive myself at full liberty ; as I violate no order, and invade no man's right, by appointing and sending labourers into the harvest." *

In 1784, he took this decided step, notwithstanding the regret and disapproval of his brother ; and this step satisfied both his agents and the American Methodists. From Bristol, Dr. Coke, burning with zeal, sailed to New York, and thence began his itinerant labours. In Pennsylvania he found a feeling friendly to Methodism ; there he met Mr. Asbury, who was to be associated with him ; he convened a conference at Baltimore, where sixty out of eighty-one preachers assembled, and there the final arrangements were made. The general conference was to choose, the Bishops were

* See his Letters of Ordination. Southey, ii. p. 439.



to consecrate, the Bishop. He was to preside in the conference, station the preachers, and travel through the connection. Some changes were made in the mode of administering the Sacraments.

Dr. Coke then consecrated Mr. Asbury a Bishop, and the two leaders presented a petition on behalf of the Methodist body to Washington, by whom the Methodist Episcopal Church was finally recognized.

These arrangements completed, Dr. Coke plunged into the work which was congenial to him. He had much of Wesley's ardor, with less of his sobriety of judgment. But America needed that ardent zeal. Deprived of the English clergy, the episcopalian body had been left to themselves. Churches were in ruins, or were used to shelter pigs and cattle. The rising population had no provision for religion, and had rapidly lost all sense of it. Among many, the name even of our Saviour was absolutely unknown. In a young country, whose population spreads and scatters, divided from each other by forest and morass, it is not easy to attain a settled establishment for religion. To these various wants, Methodism brought a remedy; and the roughness and fervency of its itinerancy were well adapted to the case. Calmer reasoning, more temperate discourses, would have been thrown away on the rude outcasts of the desert and the forest. Graphic pictures—strong appeals—high-wrought sentiments moved them. In one hour Dr. Coke baptized more adults and chil-

dren, than he would have done in a year in a parish in England. Men marvelled when they learned, for the first time, the tidings of a judgment and a gospel.

All ranks crowded to listen. In North Carolina, the House of representatives was lent to Dr. Coke, who preached to the members from the Speaker's chair. At Annapolis, he preached in the theatre, whose pit, gallery, and boxes, swarmed with auditors.

Under this itinerancy, Methodism grew. In 1786, nearly as many members were added to it as the Society had numbered ten years before. In 1789 they had reached forty-three thousand members, and they soon surpassed, in that small population, the number of the Methodist members in Great Britain.


Not less remarkable was the progress of Methodism among the negroes of the West Indies. As early as 1758 Wesley met, at Wandsworth, the Speaker of the House of Assembly in Antigua, Mr. Gilbert, and baptized some of his negroes. Mr. Gilbert, failing on his return to procure a Methodist preacher, began to teach the negroes himself. Despised by the white population, his instructions told with effect on the blacks, who kept up, after his death, the devotional services which he had taught them.

In 1778 a shipwright from Chatham was removed to Antigua. John Baxter had been a class-teacher at home, and on his arrival in Antigua he took charge

of the infant society. Sunday he gave entirely to preaching. On week-days, as soon as his ordinary work was over, he resumed the business of a teacher. He often rode ten miles at night to preach to crowds of negroes, gathered from distant plantations. It was difficult to conceive, as a spectator of their meetings has told us, the intense emotions of the negro, when he learned, for the first time, that he was a being endowed with an immortal spirit, and capable of immortal joys.

Baxter, the happiest of men in his work, procured the building of a chapel by the money of his negro flock, and then hastened to pour forth, in a letter to Wesley, his doubts, difficulties, and hopes. He asked for help in the person of teachers, and from an unlooked-for quarter help came. First arrived, by strange circumstances, among a party of Irish emigrants, an old man, compelled by a storm, which had nearly wrecked the ship, to take refuge at Antigua. Next, wind-bound, came a vessel freighted to America, which carried Dr. Coke on his second voyage. Dr. Coke preached and administered the sacrament in the Methodist chapel, built by negro hands, and crowded with a dense congregation of negro converts. Already it appeared, that to this rude body Methodism had brought morals and peace. The soldiers, who were employed to keep the negroes from riot at Christmas, were no longer needed. The planters appreciated the impor-

tant service ; they offered Dr. Coke £500 a-year if he would settle in Antigua ; and during his stay they welcomed and entertained him. Though Dr. Coke would not remain, he left behind him one of the preachers who accompanied him ; set apart Baxter as another ; visited other West-India islands then, as well as in his visit in 1788 ; and settled Methodist preachers in the islands which belonged to England and Denmark. The Dutch authorities, to their shame be it spoken, expelled them. Every-where the missionaries were eagerly welcomed by the susceptible negroes. For them it was the first sign of admission into the family of civilized man. To them it opened, what was yet better, the glorious hopes of the Christian. The colonial authorities, with the single exception of Jamaica, received the Methodist teachers with respect. In Barbadoes the higher classes welcomed them, and the Governor of Grenada sent for them. But the favor of the planters was not lasting. The vices, in which many of them indulged, were condemned by the preaching of Christian morals ; and their habits of criminal indulgence were interfered with by the new sentiments of chastity implanted in the slaves. Baxter was assaulted in Antigua at the stair of the chapel, by a mob of drunken planters. The chapel at St. Vincent's was broken open. At Kingston, attempts were made to pull down the chapel ; the preacher's life was in danger, and many of the Methodists had a narrow escape.



Yet, in spite of this, Dr. Coke and his colleagues persevered.

The funds, needful for the support of these missions, were collected by Dr. Coke's zeal in England. Methodism spread among the negroes, and numbered 6000 members before Wesley's death. Its subsequent progress, its sufferings, and its perils have been made known to us in our own time, by the researches of travellers, and by the eloquence of some of the most eminent of our Parliamentary debaters : and they supply many thrilling narratives of suffering and zeal.


CHAPTER XI.

THE NECESSARY TENDENCY OF METHODISM.

WHILE Methodism was thus spreading itself over our colonies and the American continent, it was gradually changing its position at home.

However sincerely Wesley desired to keep his society within the sphere of the church, circumstances were too strong for his resolutions. The causes, which had directed its course in America, began to operate in England. The earnest among the Methodists sought religious ordinances, and sought them naturally from those whom they loved as teachers. They could not see why they should be told to seek ordinances of religion from strangers; and from strangers who often withheld them.

Dissenting ministers would not baptize or give the sacrament to Methodists, unless they would abandon the connection. The clergy sometimes did the same. Even, where they admitted to ordinances, it was done grudgingly, and was often accompanied by taunts and



jeers. It was not likely that such a state of things should endure. A relation so unnatural could not be maintained.

Nor did the preachers bear this state of matters better than the people. They felt it hard to be obliged to refuse ordinances which they longed to confer, and to drive away flocks which gathered to their pastoral care. Their feelings were pained, their ambition was mortified, and their consciences perplexed. What was this stern system which at once elevated and degraded them; placed them in a function of confidence, yet denied them its privileges? Some complained; others rebelled: some chafed at the curb; others broke it. The ferment and excitement grew.

In London there was a remedy; for *there* were ordained clergymen at hand to baptize and administer sacraments. But the example of London only stimulated the provinces. Charles Wesley refused concession. He held Methodism to be a revival *within* the church, not an outbreak from its pale. He left the Conference, when it entered on this delicate ground. John Wesley viewed the matter differently; he looked at it all round, as was his habit. He too wished that Methodism should remain within the church; but above all, he would have the country reformed. The work needed teachers, and at any price teachers must be had. Their difficulties therefore, and their grievances, went to his heart.

What was to be done? Methodism was the union

of earnest enquirers after truth. Must it lapse into a schism? Yet this seemed unavoidable; for the following consequences had already ensued.

Methodism had been joined by Dissenters as well as by churchmen. Dissenters brought into the new connexion their peculiar opinions. The Wesleys maintained their own views on the subject of the Church. Why should their Dissenting associates conceal *theirs*? *They* had learned from Dissent not to like episcopal ordination; *they* did not believe in the supreme validity of church ordinances.

In proportion as the numbers of Dissenting teachers increased, these sentiments began to tell. At the same time, as the movement grew, their flocks became larger; and the disciples, attached to their teachers, refused to desert them. Such feelings became stronger than churchmanship, whose ties began to give way. Wesley might point to the parish-church, and seek to group his disciples round the parish altar; but careless clergymen did more to scatter the flock, than his arguments availed to retain them. The contest was unequal; it was evident how it must end. Charles Wesley could not be brought to admit this; Mr. Grimshaw concurred with him. John Wesley hoped to postpone the crisis during his lifetime, but it came earlier.

The Church and her authorities have often been blamed for allowing the Methodists to separate from her. I doubt if this charge is well founded. The

church never could have retained the Methodists within her pale. As soon as the Society was formed, the first step of separation was taken. The polity of Methodism had a life separate from that of the church; and living bodies may be friendly, but cannot amalgamate.

The Methodist movement had now reached a point at which it became impossible to arrest it. In America, Wesley had already been compelled to ordain presbyters, and to institute bishops. *There* a church, distinct and independent, was established. In Scotland Wesley had been compelled to ordain preachers.* In England the same necessity drew near. The attempt to keep the Methodists ostensibly within the Church was fast breaking down. Those, who had joined the Connection from the side of Dissent, disliked the Church; and, rather than attend its ritual, they formed Independent congregations. Methodists, who had been originally members of the Church, followed their example. They refused to attend the services of clergymen whose lives and preaching they disapproved. John Wesley had from the first respected these scruples.† As early as 1760, when some Methodist preachers had yielded to the importunity of their flock, and had administered baptism and the Lord's Supper, John Wesley, though opposed to the practice, had given way.‡ In 1786, he formally permit-

* C. Wesley's Life, ii. p. 401.

† Ibid. ii. p. 187.

‡ Ibid. ii. pp. 401—410.

ted service to be held in Methodist chapels during Church hours, in certain cases which were so numerous as to cover almost every possible scruple or objection.*

He justifies this by arguments which were soon adopted by the body. His grand argument was this :—“The minister of the parish, wherein we dwell, neither loves, nor preaches the gospel. He walks in the way to hell himself, and teaches his flock to do the same. Can you advise them to attend his preaching? I cannot advise them to it;—what then can they do on the Lord’s day? Suppose no other Church be near, do you advise them to go to a Dissenting meeting, or to meet in their own preaching-house? Where this is really the case, I cannot blame them if they do. Although therefore I earnestly oppose the general separation of the Methodists from the Church, yet I cannot condemn such a partial separation in particular cases.”

Again he says, in 1788 ;—“This kind of separation has already taken place, and will inevitably spread, though by slow degrees. Those ministers so called, who neither love nor preach the gospel, I dare not say, are sent of God. Where one of these is settled, many of the Methodists dare not attend his ministry;—so if there be no other Church in the neighbourhood, they go to Church no more. This is the case in a few places

* When the minister is wicked. When he preaches Arianism, or doctrines as bad. When there are not churches enough in the town, or the Church is two or three miles off.

already, and it will be the case in more; and no one can justly blame me for this, neither is it contrary to any of my professions." Wesley had given a practical proof of his opinions two years before. "The last time I was at Scarborough," he says, in a letter to his brother, "I earnestly exhorted the people to go to Church, and I went myself,—but the wretched minister preached such a sermon, that I could not, in conscience, advise them to hear him any more.*

In 1789 John Wesley gave the last touch to the act of separation, by ordaining three of his lay-preachers to administer sacraments in England.† Nor did he do this secretly, he avowed it, and gave the preachers under his hand a testimonial of their Ordination. And he justified this from the practice of the antient Church.

Charles Wesley was less bold, but not more consistent. He and Mr. Grimshaw were scandalized when the lay-preachers acted as clergymen, or received orders from a Presbyter. They enforced on the preacher the duty of abstaining from pastoral functions, and they urged the people to attend Church.‡ But Charles Wesley avoided the society of worthless or faithless clergymen,—and had no scruple in preaching or administering sacraments, in places unconsecrated, in dioceses where he was himself unlicensed. Nor did he hesitate to mix with the liturgy temporary prayer and oral exhortation. These

* Charles Wesley's Life, Vol. ii. pp. 410, 411.

† Ibid. p. 413.

‡ Ibid. pp. 131, 132, 152, 19 .

were irregularities, but there were others more remarkable. Charles had done more than this at an early period of the movement. When John Wesley could say with truth that he had never administered sacraments out of the Church, Charles had already broken this ecclesiastical rule. One of the Bristol clergy had rejected from the Lord's Table himself and several of his earlier converts. Scandalized and grieved, Charles took the poor men to the school-house at Kingswood, and there administered to them the sacrament. So clear was it, that order could not hold him when the interest of his mission was touched. In Scotland the intolerance of Episcopacy had its natural effect in accelerating the irregularities of the Methodists. The Episcopal Clergy had refused the Methodists the sacrament, unless they would renounce Methodism. It was in order to meet this evil that Wesley ordained Lay-Preachers, and he did this for Scotland at the same time that he ordained them for the West Indies.

It was always with a fixed purpose that Wesley guided his varying tactics. He liked order, but he sought public reformation; and if order stood in the way, he trod it down without compunction.

Charles characterized his brother's policy, while comparing it with his own: his own maxim was, first the Church, then the Methodists; his brother's, first the Methodists, then the Church. John Wesley's view was

more correctly expressed by himself when, in answer to his brother's remonstrance, he took the step of consecrating Dr. Coke.

"I see no use of you and me disputing together. You will not, and cannot help me yourself; do not hinder those that can and will. I must and will save as many souls as I can, while I live, without being careful what may possibly be when I die."

But combined with these causes which led to separation from the Church, there were other reasons. Ordained clergymen, when they joined the Methodists, found a protection in their clerical character. The magistrate did not dare to arrest them as vagrants, or to impress them as soldiers; even the rabble had respect for their gowns; but the Lay-Preachers were unprotected. The Wesleys, anxious to avoid dissent, had forbid the preachers to take oaths, get a certificate, or ask a license for their meeting-houses. Yet, without these, they were exposed to fine and imprisonment. The question was soon brought to issue. Some magistrates refused to admit them to the benefit of the toleration-act, unless they would declare themselves Dissenters,* and avow that they scrupled to use the ordinances of the Church. And as they could not say this, in Lincolnshire the magistrates imposed heavy fines on them, while in other counties they prosecuted them.

Thus on all sides the pressure of events overpowered

* Southey, Vol. ii. pp. 535. C. Wesley's Life, ii. pp. 190—196.

the wishes of the founder. He desired to amalgamate, —to give new life and infuse vigour into the Church. Events disturbed and destroyed his scheme. A new body grew up which might be on terms of friendship with the Church, but could not be one with it.

If the movement of Methodism had its use, we must take it with its consequences. Once admitted and established, it ensured separation. Wesley had an organizing head, and the hand of a ruler. He was prompt, pliant, and inventive. But the machine which he made had impulses and tendencies of its own, which, overruling his wishes, decided its direction. The founder was intent on his work, and sought only to complete it. He was eminently successful. The vessel was made. But when it was launched, its course was inevitable. The builder wished to see it remain within the port. Its own force and the elements carried it far to sea.

CHAPTER XII.

THE AUTUMN OF METHODISM.

DURING the ten years which elapsed from 1770 to 1780, the fortunes of Methodism seemed to advance. It was the burst of a marvellous spring. The Society had escaped many hazards, and had spread to every part of the empire. It had extended itself in the Colonies ; it was robust at home. The storm, with which it had been assailed, had died away, and its preachers were now unembarrassed. The number of its members had increased, and its affairs had become so important, that the time necessary for its annual conference was fixed in 1780 at nine days.* The body still felt the able pressure of Wesley's hand, and a spirit of friendly concert prevailed. On the site of Finsbury Square, in the midst of brick-fields, archery grounds and gardens, stood the Cathedral of Methodism : used after the Restoration as a foundry for cannon, then abandoned as dilapidated, it had preserved its old name of the Foundry. A ruinous

* C. Wesley's Life, ii. pp. 327, 328.

place, with a pantile roof and a few rough deal boards for a pulpit, was the shelter which John Wesley sought in London from mobs and storms. But the old building had been replaced by an imposing chapel, to which were attached Wesley's house, a school, a printing-house, and a dispensary. As soon as the bell sounded on the top of the chapel, at five in the morning, or at dusk in the evening, crowds of lanterns might be seen twinkling over the waste ground and gardens; lighting the steps of the multitude who flocked to hear Charles Wesley, or John, or some other favourite preacher. Charles Wesley became at last the settled minister, when he resided in London, in Chesterfield Street.

But though all the outward symptoms of Methodism thus spoke of vigor and progress, the sere and yellow marks betokened autumnal decay. We need not take the evidence of the envious or hostile; the clearest testimony comes from the founder himself.

In the first days of the sect, when in the midst of furious attacks a burst of revival had sprung up,* Wesley had pointed with exultation to these signs, and had pronounced it the most marvellous reformation that had arisen since the days of the apostles.† When by the exercise of rare tact, energy, and patience, he had conso-

* Southey, ii. p. 529.

† "Through England, Europe, and America, sinners have been thoroughly changed both in heart and life, not by tens or hundreds only, but by thousands, yea, by myriads."

lidated the system, completed the structure, and provided against decay, he marvelled to find that, in the very strength and maturity of his work, decrepitude and weakness appeared. "Might I not have expected," he says sadly, "a general increase of faith and love? Truly, when I saw what God had done among his people, between forty and fifty years ago, when I saw them warm in their first love, magnifying the Lord and rejoicing in God their Saviour, I could expect nothing less than that all these would have lived like angels here below." Instead of this he found Societies weak, which he had left strong. Those, which a few years before were thriving, he found drooping, or in collapse;—some had become so foul, that it was necessary to cleanse them; others so corrupt, that there was no remedy but to break them up. There is "more imaginary than unfeigned faith," says Fletcher of the Methodists, "in most of them who pass for believers." Antinomian indulgence was, he adds, the "motto of professing congregations, societies, families, and individuals."

As early as 1755, John Wesley descried this change, His brother had expressed a fear that the Methodists would leave the church. He says, in answer:—"I have no fear about this matter. I only fear the preachers and the people leaving, not the church, but the love of God, inward and outward holiness."*

His sanguine temper was always discovering signs

* C. Wesley's Life, ii. p. 83.

of good ; and looking forward to progress, while his clear discernment discovered the disappointment, and he was too candid not to confess it. Half-a-dozen times he records with delight a revival of religion among the children in Kingswood school. As many times he confesses sadly, that all traces of good were gone. The truth is, though he was too much absorbed in his work to see it, that it is one thing to awaken feelings,—another to instil principles. A sudden shock may galvanize men into the excitement of motion. It needs a different agency to infuse and sustain a healthy life. Stimulants are not nutriment ; useful to raise us out of stupor ; they do not serve for daily sustenance.

Wesley's mission was a restorative ; but it failed as a regimen. It is well to touch the causes, while we trace the proofs, of the failure. And we may give these in the words, and with the authority, of Wesley himself.

“ How is it possible that Methodism, that is a religion of the heart, though it flourishes as a green-bay-tree, should continue in this state ? For the Methodists in every place grow diligent and frugal. Consequently they increase in goods. Hence they perpetually increase in pride, in anger, in the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life,” &c.*

Whatever we may think of the justice of this argument, we should notice the admission. The fact of decline is avowed. Wesley's sermons are full of the

* Southey, ii. p. 522. Wesley's Works, vii. p. 277.

same evidence.* Nothing can be more distinct than his principles,—nothing more earnest than his precepts. Obedience to God's commands,—watchfulness against evil,—tenderness of conscience,—purity of heart,—self-denial,—care of temper,—discharge of duty,—activity in work,—retreat for self-examination and prayer,—attendance on the ordinances of the church,—self-examination,—tears of penitence,—these are the duties which he presses, through sermons short, cogent, and plain, with a force and fulness which leave us nothing to desire.† When we bear in mind that he preached eight hundred of these sermons yearly, we must admit that his part at least was done.

But, if we take his own testimony, small, and less as Methodism grew, was the effect of his toil.‡ Sadly does he complain of his failure. Those, who are sincere among his disciples, he reckons at 500 among 50,000.§ “Why has Christianity done so little good even among Methodists?” Why is self-denial in general so little practised at present among the Methodists? Why is so exceedingly little of it to be found even in the oldest and largest societies?”

“It is an observation which admits of few exceptions, that nine in ten of them decreased in grace, in the same proportion as they increased in wealth.”||

* Sermons, Vol. v. pp. 12, 58, 59, 68, 70, 78, 101—103, 180, 181, 229.

† Ibid. pp. 16, 19, 33, 34.

‡ Sermon 87. p. 13.

§ Sermons, Vol. vii. 87, 88, 89, 108, 116, 126.

|| Sermon 116, p. 273.

Wesley had tried rigid rules to restrain worldly conformity; Gold and silver ornaments; lace, velvet, and fine linen; ruffles, buckles, and powder, he had forbidden with the strictness of a monk. But the worldliness grew; and Wesley, still confiding in his system, reproaches himself that he did not at first enjoin on his disciples a peculiar dress, like that of the Quakers, which he thinks, might in separating them from the world, have severed them from its spirit. Worldliness and the love of money are the plague-spots, which he sees spreading, which he notes, brands, tries to repress, and fails. His words are worth recording, both as lessons, not without their use in our self-indulgent age—and as proofs of the point on which I am dwelling.

To those who spent their money in their own gratification, he says,—

“For mercy, for pity, for Christ’s sake, for the honor of the Gospel, stay your hand. Do not throw this money away. Do not lay out on nothing, yea, worse than nothing, what may clothe your poor, naked, shivering fellow-creatures.” *

Again,—“After you have gained all you can, and saved all you can, wanting for nothing, spend not one pound or shilling or one penny to gratify either the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, or the pride of life; or for any other end than to please and glorify God.”

* Sermon cxxvi, p. 345.

To those, who were amassing wealth, he appeals. For, though advocating industry, frugality, and a fit provision for a man and his family, he was against all accumulation beyond this.

“You will have no reward in heaven for what you lay *up*. You will for what you lay *out*. Every pound you put into the earthly bank is sunk: it brings no interest above. But every pound you give to the poor is put into the bank of heaven. And it will bring glorious interest; yea, and as such will be accumulated to all eternity. Hoard nothing. If you have no family, after you have provided for yourself, give away all that remains.” *

“Permit me,” he says, “to speak as freely of myself as I would of another man; I gain all I can (mainly by writing), without hurting either my soul or body. I save all I can, not willingly wasting any thing,—not a sheet of paper, nor a cup of water: I do not lay out anything, not a shilling, unless as a sacrifice to God. Yet, by giving all I can, I am effectually secured from laying up treasures upon earth; and that I do this, I call all that know me, both friends and foes, to testify. I cannot help leaving my books behind me, whenever God calls me hence, but in every other respect, my own hands will be my executors.” †

Again, he says,

* Sermon lxxxix. p. 345.

† Ibid. p. 8.

“After having served you between sixty and seventy years, with dim eyes, shaking hands, and tottering feet, I give you one more advice before I sink into the dust. I am pained for you that are rich in this world. Do you give all you can? ‘I must provide for my children.’ Certainly, but how? by making them rich? Then you will probably make them heathens. Leave them enough to live on, not in idleness and luxury, but by honest industry. And if you have not children, upon what scriptural or rational principle can you leave a groat behind you, more than will bury you? I pray, consider, what are you the better for what you leave behind you; what does it signify, whether you leave behind you 10,000 pounds, or 10,000 shoes or boots? Oh! leave nothing behind you; send all you have before you into a better world! Lend it. Lend it all unto the Lord, and it shall be paid unto you again. Is there any danger that his Truth should fail? It is fixed as the pillar of heaven.”*

But I need not heap up evidence. It is plain, that, when the first impulse of Methodism had passed, declension set in. Much of this arose from human weakness and from the worldliness of man. But the system had its share in this; and its stimulants, which roused emotion, served to deaden piety. How this result arose, is a question for the philosopher; and by one of

* Sermon cxxvi, p. 345.

eminence in Christian philosophy, it has been wisely handled.* My duty is only to notice it in passing, and to observe that any system, which makes Christianity chiefly dependent on impulse, novelty, and the sympathy of numbers, however useful at the outset, will be ineffective in the end ; it may help to awaken thought, but will fail to form and reform character.

Still, we must not forget our debt to Methodism. It restored religion, when it had sunk low in England, and our national morals, when they were decayed. I take one specimen of its power, and I ask my readers to bear in mind that the letter, from which I quote, was written by a sempstress-girl at Newcastle, in the midst of din, dust, and smoke, with no teaching except that which she had received from her Methodist instructors. Yet see to what lofty thoughts she had been raised.

“I know not how to agree to the not working. I am still unwilling to take any thing from any body. I work out of choice, having never yet learned how a woman can be idle and innocent. I have had as blessed times in my soul, sitting at my work, as ever I had in my life ; especially in the night-time, when I see nothing but the light of a candle and a white cloth, and hear nothing but the sound of my own breath, with God in my sight, and heaven in my soul, I think myself one of the happiest creatures below the skies.

* See Alexander Knox's Remains. Letters to J. Butterworth.

I do not complain that God has not made me some fine thing, to be set up to be gazed at ; but I can heartily bless Him that He has made me, just what I am, a creature capable of the enjoyment of Himself. If I go to the window and look out, I see the moon and stars ; I meditate awhile in the silence of the night, consider this world as a beautiful structure, and the work of an Almighty hand ; then I sit down to work again, and think myself one of the happiest of beings on it." *

The teaching which could lead to such happiness is not to be lightly regarded ; the missionary of such truth has justly won for himself a high name.

* Southey, ii. p. 530.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LAST SCENES OF THE MISSION.

I HAVE said enough of the tendency of Methodism. I return to trace the life of its founder in its later scenes.

The year 1774 found John Wesley, after ministerial labours of thirty-five years, after more than one generation had passed away, pursuing in his seventy-second year the same work with the same energy which he had shewn in his prime. Still he preaches twice or thrice a day, not unfrequently four times in a day,* in the open air, in all weathers, in meadows, streets, or hill-sides, to vast multitudes, or in churches which his voice fills, beginning at five in the morning,† and the evening finds him yet engaged. By horse or boat, in mud, sleet, or storm, he makes his way to his post. A walk of ten miles, in the midst of his day, is nothing to him.‡ Unchanged in his custom, he goes to bed at half past nine in the evening,§ rises at three in the morning when his journeys demand it, and, as his usual

* Journal, iv. pp. 54, 135, 157, 270, 45, 134.

† Ibid. p. 35.

‡ Ibid. p. 36.

§ Ibid. p. 33.

practice, at four o'clock, in order to be ready to preach at five. He breaks off a ministerial tour, to travel post-haste from Congleton to Bristol, 140 miles, when railways were not, and to return, after two hours spent in Bristol, to resume his preaching in Cheshire. Many fall around him, younger and stronger men. Age grasps his cotemporaries and breaks them into decrepitude. He stands erect in his slight but sinewy frame, and looks forty years their junior. His recipe is to rise at four o'clock, to preach at five in the morning, and to travel (chiefly on horseback) 4,500 miles in the year.*

"This being my birth-day, the first day of my seventy-second year, I was considering how this is, that I find just the same strength, as I did thirty years ago? That my sight is evidently better now, and my nerves firmer than they were then? That I have none of the infirmities of old age, and have lost several that I had in my youth."†

"April 16, 1776:—I preached about noon at Chowbent. As we were considering in the afternoon what we should do, the rain not suffering us to be abroad, one asked the vicar for the use of the Church, to which he readily consented. I began to read Prayers at half past five. The Church was so crowded, &c. April 17, After preaching at Bury about noon, I went on to Rochdale, and preached in the evening to a numerous congregation. April 18, I clambered over the horrid

* Journal, iv. p. 10.

† Ibid. p. 22.

‡ Ibid. p. 20.

mountains to Todmorden, and thence to Heptonstall on the brow of another mountain. Such a congregation scarce ever met in the Church before. In the evening I preached in the Croft. Oct. 13, 1778, I took a little tour into Oxfordshire, and preached in the evening at Wallingford.* Oct. 14. I went on to Oxford, and, having an hour to spare, walked to Christchurch, for which I cannot but still retain a peculiar affection. What lovely mansions are these. In the evening I preached at Finstock. How gladly could I spend a few weeks in this delightful solitude. But I must not rest yet, as long as God gives me strength to labour, I must use it. Oct. 13, I preached at Witney, &c. Oct. 16, I was desired to preach at Thame on my return to London." This he did, visited the sick, and then preached in the evening at High Wycombe, and on Saturday returned to London.†

"At Witney we had a lovely congregation at five : about nine I preached at Oxford, in Newnham at one, and in the evening at Wallingford." Next day, two sermons at Kingston Lodge and Ramsbury.

Here is a specimen of a week,‡—Sept. 1779. Monday, preached in the market-place at Carmarthen. Tuesday, nine miles off at Kidwelly at eight, at eleven in the church-yard of Llanelly, at six in Swansea. Wednesday, preached at five in Swansea, at eight in

* Journal, iv. p. 131, 132.

† Ibid. p. 54.

‡ Works, iv. p. 157.

Neath town-hall, in the afternoon in the Church, and at six in the town-hall of Cowbridge: vast crowds, great heat, 'I was no more tired, when I had done, than when I rose in the morning.' Thursday, at Cowbridge, preached at five, again at eleven, in the evening in Llandaff. Friday, preached twice at Cardiff, then on to Newport, and on Saturday to Bristol. On Sunday preached and gave the sacrament to a vast crowd, and at five to a multitude in the square with a thermometer that day at 80°.

"Again; Aug. 1776,* I rode on horse-back to St. Agnes, where the rain constrained me to preach in the house. As we rode back to Redruth, it poured down in torrents, and found its way through all our clothes. I was tired when I came in, but, after sleeping a quarter of an hour, all my weariness was gone."

"Nov. 1778,† at the end of Stroud I chose to walk up the hill, leaving the coach to follow me. But it was in no great haste; it did not overtake me till I had walked above five miles. I cared not if it had been ten; the more I walk, the sounder I sleep."

His life was one incessant whirl of movement and preaching.‡ Within half a year, the old man makes two circuits of Ireland, traverses Scotland from Berwick to Inverness, and each day of his circuit is one of travelling, and generally of preaching. In thirty-one days he preaches thirty-two sermons, while he works his

* Journal iv. p. 79.

† Ibid. p. 133.

‡ Ibid. p. 125.

way from Nairn to Hull.* Add to this, personal visits of reproof and comfort, prayers beside the sick, special journeys to cheer the dying; conferences, rebukes, encouragements to Societies and preachers. The only change in his habits was, that, after riding 100,000 miles,† having in his sixty-ninth year suffered an operation, he resorted more than before to a chaise, but he was always ready to get on horse-back or travel by coach, in order to reach his home. In these journeys he was never idle. Three hours in the day, often ten or twelve, being thus spent alone, he devoured an enormous amount of reading. There was hardly a book, grave or gay, which he did not examine, poetry, philosophy, history and divinity, local history and classics, histories of Norwich, Pennant's Scotland, Warner's Ireland and Zetland, Cave's Antiquities, voyages of Cook, Byron, and Dr. Johnson; poems of Blackmore, Ossian, and Young; the writings of Lord Kames, of Swift, and Skelton, Hutchinson's metaphysics, the speculations of Parsons, the works of good Lord Lyttleton, of the scoffing Voltaire, of Walpole, Chesterfield, Rousseau and Hume, the Decalogues of Lucian, the Cyropædeia of Xenophon. "History, poetry, and philosophy, I commonly read on horse-back, having other employments at other times."

Books of Physics, histories of Witchcraft, books of Mythology, histories of India and Europe by Raynal

* Journal, iv. p. 149.

† Ibid. p. 374.

and Robertson, Hooke's history of Rome, Bonavici's Italy, Burnet's Geology, Swedenborg's reveries, the tracts of Dáillé, the works of 'one W. Dell,' all sorts of Theology, ranging from the writings of the Quaker Barclay and the Presbyterian Erskine to those of Pascal and Fenelon.

Wesley retained through life his fondness for the classics. He was apt in quotation. With French he was familiar. His conversation was rich and full. Long travels, and constant observation had given him a store of knowledge, and he poured this forth in familiar intercourse. The greatest thinker and talker of his day, Dr. Johnson, admired Wesley, and the note, in which he thanked him for his Commentary on the Bible, is a tribute.* The great philosopher had long desired to enjoy his conversation, and at last, through the intervention of his sister, he accomplished it. Wesley dined with him in Salisbury court at the early hour of three. With his usual precision, Wesley had assigned two hours to this meal, and he rose as soon as these had passed. Dr. Johnson was greatly disappointed; but on Wesley's sister saying, "Why, Doctor, my brother has been with you two hours." He replied; "Two hours, Madam! I could talk all day and all night too with your brother."

Wesley's precision as to time was exact, from which he was enabled to accomplish so much. Forced to wait one day ten minutes for his chaise, he was overheard to

* Moore's Life, ii. p. 432.

say to himself, I have lost ten minutes for ever. But in all this there was no bustle—every thing was done with the utmost quietness. “You need not,” said one to him, “be in a hurry, Sir.” “A hurry,” was his reply,—“No, I have no time to be in a hurry.”

But neither of course did he know leisure. All his day was assigned to work. This was Dr. Johnson’s complaint. “John Wesley’s conversation is good, but he is never at leisure. He is always obliged to go at a certain hour. This is very disagreeable to a man, who loves to fold his legs and have his talk out, as I do.”

Wesley wrote much. Besides pamphlets innumerable in defence of Methodism, he wrote his elaborate Commentary ; Lessons for Children—Grammars, Hebrew and Latin ; abridgments of Potter’s and Kennet’s Antiquities ; Greek and Roman Histories for Schools, quotations collected from English poets— and a Book on Medicine. He wrote slowly, but, as he never went back on his writings for revision, he wrote much.

He kept his accounts with rigorous exactness. Every penny is recorded. It was thus he was able to gratify his charitable feelings, for his charities were great—his kindness to the poor knew no bounds.* Dr. Johnson liked the conversation of Wesley ; another man, not less famous, understood his character. John Howard had first heard Wesley preach at his seat in Bedfordshire, and he never forgot the impression of that sermon—the

* Moore, ii. p. 435.

text was ; "Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." It was one of the turning-points in Howard's life. In 1787 Howard met Wesley in Dublin, and of his conversation with him on that occasion we have a record by Alexander Knox. When Howard visited Mr. Knox, he was full of the meeting which he had had with John Wesley. "I was encouraged by him," he said, "to go on vigorously with my own designs. I saw in him how much a single man might achieve by zeal and perseverance, and I thought, Why may not I do as much in my own way, as Mr. Wesley has done in his,—if I am only as assiduous and persevering." Once again, before his last visit to the East, Mr. Howard called at Wesley's house in the City Road, carrying his volume upon Jails under his arm, to present to him, and to take his leave of him. Wesley was absent, and they did not meet—but he left his respects and love, and bade him be told that "he had hoped to have seen him once more, but that, if they did not meet again in this world, they would meet, he trusted, in a better."

It is pleasant to read that one, so competent to judge as Alexander Knox, should have left it as his opinion, that Wesley and Howard realized his idea of angelic goodness.* "Very lately (in 1789)," Mr. Knox writes;—"I had an opportunity for some days together, of observing Mr. Wesley with attention. I endeavoured to consider him not so much with the eye of a friend, as with the

* Moore, ii. p. 455.

impartiality of a philosopher ; and I must declare that every hour I spent in his company, afforded me fresh reasons for esteem and veneration. So fine an old man I never saw. The happiness of his mind beamed forth in his countenance : every look shewed how fully he enjoyed 'the gay remembrance of a life well spent.' Wherever he went, he diffused a portion of his own felicity. Easy and affable in his demeanour, he accommodated himself to every sort of company, and shewed how happily the most polished courtesy may be blended with the most perfect piety. In his conversation we might be at a loss, whether to admire most his fine classical taste, his extensive knowledge of men and things, or his overflowing goodness of heart. While the grave and serious were charmed with his wisdom, his sportive sallies of innocent mirth delighted even the young and thoughtless ; and both saw in his uninterrupted cheerfulness the excellency of true religion. No cynical remarks on the levity of youth embittered his discourses, no applausive retrospect to past times marked his present discontent. In him even old age appeared delightful, like an evening without a cloud, and it was impossible to observe him without wishing fervently 'May my latter end be like his !' But I find myself unequal to the task of delineating such a character. What I have said may to some appear as panegyric ; but there are numbers, and those of taste and discernment too, who can bear witness to the truth, though by no means to

the perfectness, of the sketch I have attempted. With such I have been frequently in his company ; and every one of them, I am persuaded, would subscribe to all I have said. For my own part, I never was so happy as while with him, and scarcely ever felt more poignant regret, than at parting from him ; for well I knew, ‘I ne’er should look upon his like again.’ ”

Wesley’s philanthropy was universal, and the interest he took in the abolition of the Slave Trade, is shewn in a letter written during the last year of his life.*

As a preacher he was remarkable. That a man should preach three or four sermons daily, and preach always well, it would be absurd to suppose. Yet even of one of his inferior sermons, Dr. Beattie of Aberdeen says, that “though not a masterly sermon, none but a master could have preached it.” The fire, and earnestness of the thoughts, the closeness and terseness of the argument, were always to be noted. Not so eloquent as Whitefield—far less dramatic—his style bears better to be recorded, and his sermons may be read with pleasure. But of the versatility of his genius and the way in which he grappled with the most different subjects, if any one wishes to form an idea, they need only take at random any volume of his writings :—They will find Thoughts on Earthquakes ; on Dreams ; on Extraordinary Cures ; on the Use of Tea ; on Nervous Disorders ; on Dews ; mixed with Thoughts on Christian Perfec-

* Moore, ii. p. 437.

tion; on Self-examination; Tracts for Swearers, Drunkards, Scolds, Smugglers, Felons, Soldiers; Thoughts on Marriage; on Single Life;—addresses to England, Ireland, to Protestants; Political Lectures on Liberty, Slavery, American Colonies;—Hints on Dress; on Manners; Disquisitions on Society, mixed with Biographical Studies and Forms of Prayer. Nothing gives a juster idea of the versatility of his mind.

His powers as a controversialist were often tried, and his controversial writings are full of vigor. Against antagonists such as Bishop Lavington, Bishop Gibson, Warburton, Conyers Middleton, and Taylor of Norwich, he acquitted himself well.

His curiosity was equal to that of honest Evelyn. Gentlemen's seats, gardens, and old houses, he visits with keen relish; the mountains, rocks, and glens, which he passes, he notes with a delighted eye. Cobham and Stowe, Knowle, the Primate's and Lord Charlemont's Seats in Ireland; Fleurs and Gordon Castle, in Scotland; Museums, and galleries of pictures, collections of flowers, and plants, all are observed; and he finds time, while resting his horse, or passing an interval between two of his sermons, to record his impressions. For his pen was as busy as his tongue; and journals, letters, and pamphlets, fall from him, as he passes on, quick and thick as a snow-drift.

Yet on this eager mind, never at rest, time seemed not to press; and age spares him. "I have now com-

pleted my seventy-fourth year, and by the peculiar favor of God, I find my health and strength and all my faculties of body and mind just the same, as they were at four-and-twenty.”*

“I am this day seventy-five years old, and I do not find myself, blessed be God, any weaker than I was at five-and-twenty.”

At seventy-seven, he says, “I took horse ; at twelve I preached to a loving people. Thence we crossed over another range of dreary mountains, and in the evening reached Barnard Castle. Not being yet inured to riding (!!) I felt something like weariness, (good at seventy-seven !!) but I forgot it in the lovely congregation, and in the evening it was gone.”

“I can hardly think that I am this day entered into the seventy-eighth year of my age. I am just the same as when I entered the twenty-eighth.”

“June 28, 1782. I entered into my eightieth year, but, blessed be God, my time is not labor and sorrow. I find no more pain or bodily infirmities than at five-and-twenty. This I still impute to the favor of God, fitting me for what he calls me to : to my still traveling four or five thousand miles a-year ; to my sleeping, night or day, whenever I want it ; to my rising at a set hour, and to my constant preaching, particularly in the morning.”

“June 28, 1783. I have this day lived fourscore

* Journal, iv. pp. 97, 124, 171, 178.

years; and, by the mercy of God, my eyes are not waxed dim, and what little strength of body or mind I had thirty years since, just the same I have now." * He repeats this the following year.

In 1785, he says, "I finished the eighty-second year of my age. It is now eleven years since I have felt any such thing as weariness." He preaches till his voice fails; walks till he can walk no longer:—"yet even then I feel no sensation of weariness, but am perfectly easy from head to feet." † He repeats this next year.

The sicknesses, which he had had during his long life, had served, as he thought, to strengthen his constitution; certainly to prove its strength.

In Ireland (in 1775) he was struck down at Lisburn by fever, which lasted for above a week. Yet in four days he was on foot again, and in a chaise off to Dublin. In 1783, he had two similar attacks; yet from both he recovered rapidly, and resumed his labours. ‡

The means which, as he judged, preserved his health, were, as he tells us: "continual exercise and change of air; rising at four; the power of sleeping at once whenever he required it, and never having lost a night's sleep in his life; two violent fevers, and two deep consumptions; rough medicines. May I add, lastly, evenness of temper? I feel and grieve, but, by the grace of God, I fret at nothing."

* Journal, iv. pp. 245, 270.

† Ibid. pp. 302, 321.

‡ Ibid. pp. 47, 234, 248.

In this happy temper, busy life, and buoyant frame, he passed his time; ruminating in the churchyard at Epworth, he sees men drop around him, "as the tree drops its leaves." Sitting at Kingswood, under the shade of trees which he had planted, he sees his plans flourish, like his plants, and his societies strike their roots into the soil. The scoffs, which had assailed him, had passed away, the embers of old enmity had died out. From Cornwall to Cumberland he now travelled without an insult;* and the miners of the south, the colliers of Stafford, and the nailers of Warwick, regarded him with respect. Enormous congregations gathered to hear him; halls, churches, and market-places swarmed with auditors.† Even Scotland began to thaw. His views were tolerated, at least, by that people, bred up in a different school, of whom he complained, that they were as cold and hard as their rocks; that they heard every thing, and felt nothing. His influence reached *them* at length, though more feebly, and crowds in Edinburgh and Aberdeen frequented his sermons.

The clergy of his own church remained divided in opinion regarding him: many disliked his preaching; many were shamed by it; but many churches were opened to him. Several of the bishops treated him with respect, and the learned bishop Louth shewed the reverence which the years and services of Wesley

* Journal, iv. 11, 26, 42, 51, 68, 151.

† Ibid. 9, 13, 51, 53, 126.

claimed. Even the bishop of Exeter, Lavington, once his bitter antagonist, invited him to dine, on one of his visits to Exeter, and treated him, in presence of a large body of his clergy, with marked deference. It was indeed, impossible for any man to behold, without sympathy, such untiring zeal. The constant circuit through the towns of England from March to November; the diligence which knew no rest; the warmth which never cooled; and the earnestness which never abated; these were marvels to all. None could see the old man in the street without being struck. He was little of stature, but the fine face, aquiline nose, quick bright eye, clear smooth forehead, and color fresh as a boy, with the long silver hair, arrested the bystanders, even more than the band and cassock which Wesley always wore. His dress was notable; a narrow plaited stock, a coat with small upright collar, no silk, or velvet, or buckles, but the whole attire scrupulously neat; and the brisk pace, and busy manner shewed that every minute of his day was numbered. In every thing round him, he observed exact order. In his study not a book was misplaced—not a scrap of paper out of its niche. Even on his journeys, in his inn, he dropped at once into the order which he prized.

The mind seemed as stereotyped as the habits. He wrote sermons at fourscore as he had done at fifty; and his earlier sermons expressed the views of his ripper years. At the age of eighty he crossed to Holland,

travelled and preached there for a month; saw its sights, noted its customs, made acquaintance with its famous men, and returned, refreshed by novelty and conversation.

At the age of eighty-one, the body was as fit for work as ever. He continued his rapid circuits to Ireland and Inverness; rode, talked, comforted and preached; and the old man standing in the churchyard of Epworth, with the fresh associations of the boy, or rising at Kingswood, "under the shade of that double row of trees which I planted about forty years ago," preached as vigorously in the open air, as he had done thirty years before. In his eighty-fourth year he made his circuit through Ireland, preaching, visiting, organizing, and sight-seeing; and crossed to the Channel Islands, where, storm-stayed in Jersey, he preached with his usual power. In that year he first records the signs of decay*—less activity, slower walking uphill, not able to read small print by candle-light, and the memory not so strong. Still, in his eighty-fifth year, he says,† that there is no decay in his hearing, smell, taste, or appetite, nor in his powers of writing, preaching, or travelling. The next year he admits, that "he is now growing old." Other persons remarked it in the greater tendency to drowsiness, and in the decline of strength of limb and memory. Yet his usual work was not interrupted.

* Journal iv. 270.

† Ibid. 391.

‡ Ibid. 409.

He attended the Conference,—kept days of fasting and prayer,—preached to large congregations,—visited Ireland,* and continued his preaching circuits through England.

Even then the old man of eighty-five preached *twice a day*; and at Tanderagee crowds heard him under the shade of spreading trees, with the river's music blending with the melody of truth.† In his eighty-seventh year he continues to read a variety of works; to step from his chaise into the pulpit; to address crowded congregations, and visit the classes; to travel as far north as Forfar. But now infirmities beset him—"his eyes dim,—his right hand shaking,—mouth hot and dry,—a lingering fever, and his motions weak and slow." Still he says, "blessed be God, I do not slack my labour. I can preach and write still." ‡

"I feel no pain from head to foot; only it seems nature is exhausted, and, humanly speaking, will sink more and more, till

'The weary springs of life stand still at last.'

Yet he preaches and travels, and, having intermitted for a time his five o'clock sermon, he resumes it in his eighty-eighth year, and makes his circuit that autumn from Lincoln to Wilts, and from Somerset to Hants, Sussex, Essex, and the Eastern Counties.

* Journal, iv. 445.

† Ibid. 443.

‡ Ibid. 458, 470. January and August 1790.

Testimonies of respect now flow in upon him. In his last visit to Norfolk, the clergy crowded to hear him, and the Bishop of Norwich learned with pleasure that Wesley occupied their pulpits.*

On the 24th of October, (1790) he concluded the journal which had been the record of his many movements and pursuits; and, in the middle of the same year, he closed his account-book with this entry, hardly legible, written by his trembling hand,—“For upwards of eighty-six years I have kept my accounts exactly; I will not attempt it any longer, being satisfied with the conviction that I save all I can—that is, all I have.”

On the 1st of February, 1791, he wound up, in a letter to America, his voluminous correspondence.

One trial harassed his last year, and drew from him some words of remonstrance. In some places the magistrates had attacked the meetings of the Methodists, and fined those, who held them, as guilty under the Conventicle Act; excluding them from the benefit of the Act of Toleration, because they went to church; refusing them a licence, because they were not Dissenters, and then fining them, because they preached without one. A persecution so unjust roused the failing faculties of the old man,† and “a dying man,” as he says, “with one foot in the grave,” he addresses two letters of dutiful remonstrance to two of the bishops, with all the eloquent energy of his earlier

* Journal, iv. 478.

† Moore, ii. 383.

years ; and he was planning an appeal to Parliament, when death came to end his labors.

In February 1791, he prepared, as usual, to resume his circuits, and, sending his chaise to Bristol, engaged his place in a coach to Bath. On the 17th however, (Thursday,) he took cold in preaching at Lambeth, but preached at Chelsea on the Friday, and, though too ill to go out on Sunday, he resumed his habits on Monday, dined at Twickenham with a friend, and preached during the following days at the Chapel in the City Road, and at Leatherhead. But these were his last sermons. The silver chord, so long tenacious, at last gave way. On Friday the fever was high, and during that day and the next he dozed. On Sunday, however, he revived, repeated some verses of a favourite hymn, and conversed with his friends. Exhausted by this effort, he followed them earnestly, as they offered up prayer. The words that fell from him were few. He quoted the lines which, in his dangerous illness eight years before at Bristol, had given him comfort, and he referred to his experience then as unchanged. "I have been reflecting, he then said, on my past life ; I have been wandering up and down between fifty and sixty years, endeavouring in my poor way to do a little good to my fellow-creatures ; and now it is probable that there are but a few steps between me and death ; and what have I to trust to for salvation ? I can see nothing, which I have done or proposed, that will

bear looking at. I have no other plea than this;—

“I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.”

He referred to this again the same evening, as the one foundation of his hopes. The next day, sleeping much, he was heard to say, “There is no way unto the holiest, but by the blood of Jesus;”—and he more than once repeated, that by that way we have boldness to enter. On the 1st of March his strength revived, on two occasions, and broke out in a song of praise. Trying to write, and being unable, he was asked what he would have said,—“Nothing,” was his answer, “but that, God is with us.” On his trying to say, “Nature is,”—and some one completing the sentence ‘exhausted, but you are entering into a new nature, and into the society of blessed spirits,’ he answered, “Certainly,” and clasped his hands in mental prayer. Rising, in spite of his weakness, he broke forth into a hymn,—gave a brief charge about his funeral, and called on his friends to pray and praise; he then lifted up his dying arms, and repeated with emphatic voice, “The best of all is, God is with us.” It seemed as if even yet he could not abandon his cherished work. “Lord,” he said, “Thou givest strength to them that can speak, and to them that cannot; Speak, Lord, to all our hearts, and let them know that Thou loosest the tongue. We thank Thee, O Lord, for these and all thy mercies. Bless the Church and king; and grant us truth and

peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, for ever and ever."

On Wednesday, March 2, 1791, he heard the prayer of his long-tried friend, Mr. Bradford, and with the word, 'Farewell,' his spirit fled ; his countenance retaining after death a placid smile. The crowds, who came to see the body, were so great, that his friends, fearing a tumult, buried him hurriedly and without notice, between five and six in the morning—an appropriate time, as this had been the season of his services, and of his most earnest appeals to his hearers. Still hundreds attended the funeral, and when the clergyman—himself a disciple—substituted in our service the word, 'Father,' for 'brother,' with a voice trembling with emotion, the whole congregation, before that time dissolved in tears, burst into loud weeping. His Will left all he had to his friends, and to the promotion of religion ; and, rich in affection, in years, and in service, John Wesley died.

The last century contains many names eminent in various departments of politics and letters. Among poets, Pope and Cowper, Bolingbroke and Pitt among orators ; Johnson among moralists ; in the ranks of statesmen, Walpole and Burke ;—among philanthropists, Howard and Wilberforce. But, if the morality of England springs from its piety, and is essential to its greatness, John Wesley achieved a more enduring work for the welfare of England, than any of the remarkable men of that remarkable age.

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